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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE EPIC OF SAUL

A COMPANION TO "THE EPIC OF PAUL"

SAUL OF TARSUS, brought up at Jerusalem, a pupil of Gamaliel, the most celebrated Rabbi of his time, from setting out as eager but pacific controversialist in public dispute against the preachers of the Gospel, changes into a virulent, bloody persecutor of Christians, and ends by abruptly becoming himself a Christian and a teacher of Christianity. THE EPIC OF SAUL tells the story of this. "It is the great success of the poem," says Prof. John A. Paine, "to put the reader in the place of those who opposed the rising and rapidly spreading faith in Jesus, and to unfold a marvellous insight into the reasonings, motives, intrigues, and action of those actually engaged in trying to suppress the new movement; and thus, it helps to form a remarkably vivid conception of the crisis, and to gain a deeper understanding of the conflict."

"Saul in the Council Stephen's face saw shine
As it had been an angel's, but his heart
To the august theophany was blind—
Blinded by hatred of the fervent saint,
And hatred of the Lord who in him shone,
What blindfold hatred such could work of ill!
In nature meant for utter nobleness,
Then how the hatred could to love be turned,
The proud wrong will to lowly right be brought,
And Paul the 'servant' spring from rebel Saul—
This, ye who love in man the good and fair,
And joy to hail retrieved the good and fair—
From the unfair and evil, hearken all
And speed me with your wishes while I sing."—
—*From the Proem.*

APPRECIATIVE CRITICISMS.

"Decidedly impressive and attractive. . . . One never wants to lay the book down, and reads it through with increasing, rather than flagging interest."—THE SPECTATOR, London.

"Dr. Wilkinson's Epic of Saul is daring in conception, subtle in analysis, exquisite in delineation, stately in movement, dramatic in unfolding, rythmical in expression, reverent in tone, uplifting in tendency. The Poem of Saul is as truly an epic as Milton's Paradise Lost.
—REV. GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN, D.D.

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THE EPIC OF PAUL

WILLIAM CLEAVER WILKINSON
Author of "The Epic of Saul"

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THE EPIC OF PAUL.

THE action of THE EPIC OF PAUL begins with that conspiracy formed at Jerusalem against the life of the apostle which in the sequel led to a prolonged suspension of his free missionary career. It embraces the incidents of his removal from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, of his imprisonment at the latter place, of his journey to Rome for trial before Cæsar, and of his final martyrdom.

The design of the poem as a whole is to present, through conduct on Paul's part and through speech from him, a living portrait of the man that he was, together with a reflex of his most central and most characteristic teaching.

PROEM.

Paul, the new man, retrieved from perished Saul,
Unequalled good and fair, from such unfair,
Such evil, orient, miracle unguessed!—
Both what himself he was and what he taught—
This marvel in meet words to fashion forth
And make it live an image to the mind
Forever, blooming in celestial youth,
Were well despair to purer power than mine;
Help me Thou, Author of the miracle!

BOOK I.

PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT.

PAUL is arraigned before the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem. He had the day preceding been murderously set upon by a Jewish mob, from whose hands he was with difficulty rescued by a Roman officer, to be held as a prisoner supposed of infamous character. While Paul is thus held, a conspiracy of desperate Jews is formed by Shimei against his life. This conspiracy is fortunately discovered and exposed by Stephen, a young nephew of the apostle, acting at the instance of his mother Rachel, Paul's sister, and under the advice of Gamaliel, Paul's old teacher.

THE EPIC OF PAUL.

PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT.

The Sanhedrim once more, with Saul arraigned,
Saul now no longer, and no longer young,
Paul his changed name, to note his nature changed.

Confronting frown on him, a prisoner,
Paul's colleagues of the days when he was Saul.
Shimei, with smile, or scowl, uncertain which,
Hatred and pleasure both at once expressed,
Pleasure of hatred gratified, with more
Hatred than could be wholly gratified —
His pristine aspect worse and worse deformed.
Sore vexed at heart were all the Sanhedrim
That now the victim of their wished despite —
Thrice the more hated as erst so beloved,
Christian apostate the once zealot Jew! —

Stood there but doubtfully within their power;
The Roman sway had cited him — and them.

For, yesterday, Paul in the temple-court
Had with fierce violence been set upon
By Jews who thought the holy place profaned
Through his unlawful bringing thither in
Of gentile Greeks — had there been set upon
And thence dragged forth with blows that purposed death.
But, as when Stephen suffered, so again
Now intervened the Roman, and this time
Forbade the turbulence and rescued Paul —
Rescued, but double-bound his hands with chains.
Demanding then who was the prisoner,
And what his crime, and nothing learning clear
Amid the hubbub loud of various charge,
The Roman chiliarch was conducting Paul
Into the castle, by the soldiers borne —
Hardly so wrested from the eager hands
Of those enraged who thirsted for his blood,
And rent the air crying, "Away with him!" —
When calmly to his captor-savior, he
Addressed himself and asked, "May I to thee

A few words speak?" "Greek understandest thou?"
Exclaimed the Roman. "Art thou then not he,
Not that Egyptian, who but late stirred up
Sedition, and into the wilderness
Led out a company four thousand strong
Of the Assassins?" "I a Hebrew am,"
Said Paul, "of Tarsus in Cilicia,
Of no mean city citizen. Let me,
I pray thee, speak unto the multitude."

Permitted, Paul, upon the castle stairs
Standing, stretched forth his hand in manacles
Unto the tumult surging at his feet,
And, a great silence fallen upon those waves,
Spoke in the Hebrew tongue to them and said:
"Brethren and fathers, my defence hear ye."
(The silence deepened at the Hebrew words.)
"A Jew am I, who, though in Tarsus born,
Was in this city bred and at the feet
Of that Gamaliel taught the ancestral law
With every scruple of severity,
Burning in zeal for God, as now do ye.
And I this Way hunted unto the death,
Sparing from chains and from imprisonment

Nor man nor woman. This will the high priest
Witness, and all the Jewish eldership.
By these commissioned, to Damascus I
Journeyed, that, thence even, I might hither bring
For punishment disciples of the Way.
And lo, as, journeying, nigh Damascus now
I drew, at noonday round about me shone
Suddenly a great light from heaven. To earth
Prostrate I fell, and heard a voice that said,
'Saul, Saul, why art thou persecuting me?'
'Thou, thou — who art thou, Lord?' I said. And He:
'Jesus I am, Jesus of Nazareth,
Whom thou art persecuting.' Those with me
Beheld indeed the light, but to the voice
That spake to me were deaf. And I then said,
'What wilt thou, Lord, that I should do?' 'Arise,'
Said He, 'and on into Damascus go;
What thou must do shall there to thee be told.'
Blind-smitten with the glory of the light,
Into Damascus guided by the hand
I came.

"There, Ananias, a devout
Observer of the law, of good renown

With all the Hebrew Damascenes, found me.
I felt him, though I saw him not, as he
Paused standing there before me, and these words
Spake: 'Brother Saul, receive thy sight.' And I,
That selfsame hour my sight receiving, fixed
My eyes on Ananias, when he said:
'The God of our forefathers hath of thee
Made choice His will to know and to behold
The Righteous One and from His mouth a voice
To hear. For, witness shalt thou be for Him
To all men of the things thou hast beheld
And heard. And now why lingerest thou? Arise
And be baptized and wash away thy sins,
Calling upon His name.'

" Thereafter I,
Unto Jerusalem returned, and here
Within the temple praying, into trance
Passed, and beheld Him, as to me He said:
'Haste, from Jerusalem to go make speed,
For witness will they not from thee receive
Concerning Me.' 'But, Lord,' said I, 'they know
Themselves how I, of all men I, imprisoned
And scourged from synagogue to synagogue

Them that on Thee believed. And when was shed
Thy martyr Stephen's blood, I, also I,
Stood near, consenting, and their garments kept
Who slew him.' But the Lord to me replied:
'Depart, for I will send thee forth far hence
In mission to the Gentiles—"

To this word
The throng to Paul gave patient ear, but now—
At sign and instigation, ambushed erst
In waiting for the moment meet to spring,
And springing pregnant from the ready wit
Of Shimei, when that hateful hint was heard
Of mission to the Gentiles through a Jew—
Rose an uproar of voices from the crowd,
As when winds mingle sea and sky in storm.
"Away with such a fellow from the earth!"
They cried; "it is not fit that he should live."

A wild scene, for with outcry wild was mixed
Wild gesture; the whole madding multitude
Rent off their raiment, and into the air
Dust flung in cloud as where a whirlwind roars.
Astonished stood the chiliarch at the sight,
Nor doubted that some monster was the man

Against whom such a storm of clamor raged.
He bade bring Paul within the castle, there
Bade scourge him that he might his crime confess.
Already they had bound him for the thongs,
When Paul to the centurion standing by
Said, "Is it lawful for you then to scourge
A man that is a Roman — uncondemned?"
This the centurion hearing, straightway he
Went to the chiliarch and abrupt exclaimed:
"What is it thou art on the point to do?
For this man is a Roman." Then to Paul
Hastens the chiliarch and, perturbed, inquires:
"Tell me, art thou a Roman?" "Yea," said Paul.
Surprised, incredulous half, the chiliarch cried:
"I with an ample sum that franchise bought."
"But I," calmly said Paul, "was thereto born."

At that word from their prisoner, the men
Who ready round him stood the lash to ply
Instantly vanished, and the chiliarch too
Was panic-stricken — now in doubt no more
That Paul a Roman was, whom he had bound
For stripes, against a law greater than he,
Nay, sacred as the sacred majesty

Itself of the Republic — ancient name
Disguising empire! — law forbidding stripes
On any flesh that Roman title owned.

Paul slept, in Roman chains, the Christian's sleep,
That night, but ill at ease the chiliarch tossed
In troubled slumbers. He, with early morn,
To council called the Jewish Sanhedrim,
Set Paul unbound before them, and so sought
The truth to know of what on him was charged.
With calmly steadfast eye Paul faced his foes,
But Shimei smiled in confidence of guile;
Whatever the accused might seek to say,
Affront should meet him and torment his pride.
Paul, his fixed eyes pointing his moveless aim
Full in the faces of the elders, said:
"Brethren, in all good conscience have I lived
In loyalty toward God unto this day."
On such a claim from such a prisoner,
Angry the high priest Ananias cried,
"Smite him upon the mouth!" to those near by.
Paul flamed in answering righteous wrath, and said,
Flashing a lightning from his eyes on him:
"Smite thee shall God, thou whited wall! And thou,

Sittest thou here to judge me by the law,
And, the law breaking, biddest me be smitten?"

The bolted word had flown and found its mark,
And Paul stood quivering with the stern recoil.
But the bystanders, tools of Shimei,
In chorus of well-simulated zeal
Of reverence toward authority, cried out:
"The high priest, then, of God revilest thou?"
Tempting the outraged man to further vent
Volcanic of resentment at his wrong.
But Paul had tutored down his rebel will;
Meekly he said: "Brethren, I did not know
That he the high priest was, for it is writ,
'Of one that rules thy people speak not ill.'"

Through such self-recollection and self-rule,
Paul, master of himself once more become,
Became likewise master of circumstance.
Marking that Pharisee and Sadducee
Made up the assembly, he, with prudent choice,
As Pharisee to Pharisee appealed.
"Brethren," he cried, "a Pharisee am I,
From Pharisees descended; for the hope

And resurrection of the dead it is
That I this day am judged."

Discord hereon
Arose of Pharisee with Sadducee,
Which atwain rent the whole assembly there.
For Sadducee no resurrection owned,
No angel, and no spirit; Pharisee
These all confessed. A hideous clamor grew,
And certain scribes, who with the Pharisees
Sided, rose and, contending stoutly, said:
"No evil find we in this man; and if,
And if so be indeed, there hath to him
A spirit spoken, or an angel—" Thus
A hot dissension waxing, and afraid
Become the chiliarch lest his prisoner be
In sunder torn, the soldiery he sent
To pluck him from amidst the wrangling crowd,
And lodge him in the castle.

The next night
The Lord stood in theophany by Paul,
And said: "Be of good cheer; as thou of me
Hast witnessed in Jerusalem, so must
Thou also yet witness in Rome." And Paul

Was of good cheer in glad obedience,
And slept a sleep so leavened with happy dream.

But night-long lonely vigil Shimei kept,
Stung from repose to study of revenge.
At dawn, his hatch of hell, quick by the heat
Of brooding hatred in that patient breast,
Was ready to come forth and stalk abroad.
'Death to apostate Saul!' his public word,
'Death to that hated man!' was Shimei's thought.

Thought not so much, as law to him of thought,
Which formed and fixed the habit of the mind;
His thought was simply, 'How to get Paul slain,'
His feeling was a hatred bent to slay;
Now, bent to slay; once, but to torture bent.
This, partly because hatred is like love
Herein, that it, by only being, grows —
Until, at last, usurping quite the man,
It overgrows him like a polypus;
And partly because plot and act of hate
Sting to find hateful more the hated one,
Hate against whom is so self-justified.
But Shimei's hate of Paul, antipathy
At first, deep, primal, irreversible,

A doom born in him when himself was born,
And thence — from that time forth when in the hall
Of council Saul disdained and flouted him —
A conscious, fostered, festering grudge become —
This hate, now grown by but persisting long,
And much more grown through long self-exercise,
Had yet, beyond the private argument,
Its public ground of warrant for itself.
Mocker though Shimei was, not less was he,
To his full measure of sincerity,
Sincerely in his mockery a Jew;
His nation's scorn of Jesus was his scorn,
And who loved Jesus for that cause he hated.
Buoyed and supported by the spirit rife,
The common conscience, of his countrymen,
Nay, conscious of approval and acclaim
Without him, as of genius blithe within
Him, prompt to indirection and deceit,
Shimei, far more than clear and confident,
Felt also something of the fowler's joy
In cunning, as for Paul his toils he spread.

All this; yet all was not enough to fire
The hate that burned sevenfold in Shimei's breast.

With all, there was an alien element
Infused, Tartarean fuelling from beneath,
A breath of hell to blow his hate so hot.
No merely human hatred crucified
The Lord of glory and the Lord of love!
No merely human hatred followed Paul
On his angelic errand round the world,
With scourge, with ambush, with imprisonment,
And mouth agape to drink that holy blood!

Forty fanatic Jews were quickly found
To bind themselves by a religious oath
Of dreadful imprecation on their heads
Neither to eat nor drink till Paul was slain.
Prompt chance to slay him Shimei promised them;
He would procure that, on the morrow morn,
The chiliarch should desire to quit his doubt
Concerning his strange prisoner, by one more
Test of his cause before the Sanhedrim.
Then, while from the near tower Antonia, Saul
At leisure to their council-hall was brought,
So large a number of sworn arms in league
Might easily, with rash violence, breach their way
To him amid his guard of soldiery,

And, far too suddenly for these to fend,
Spill his life-blood like water on the ground —
Whence could not all the power of Rome again
Gather it up to store his veins withal.

So Shimei plotted, with the guile of hate;
But, with a wiser guile, the guile of love,
There counterplotted a true heart for Paul.

Rachel that ministry of grace had plied
For Ruth by Saul imprisoned, and for those
Of Bethany bound with her — where, meanwhile,
She for Ruth's children happy kept their home —
Month after month, with inexhaustible
Sweet patience and bright heart of hope and brave,
Until, the soul of persecution slain
In Saul converted, they were all let go
Beneath their wonted roofs at peace to dwell;
Rachel first welcoming Ruth safe home once more,
And Ruth then welcoming Rachel still to bide.

But Lazarus, toward Rachel, to and fro
Daily seen moving, with that punctual truth
To tryst so beautiful, more beautiful
In her who was herself so beautiful,

Whose every step, look, gesture, and least speech,
Or very silence, seemed a benison —
Toward Rachel, such beheld — a crescent dawn
Brightening upon him to the perfect day,
Apocalypse of lovely — Lazarus,
In secret, more and more felt his heart drawn,
Through all the dreaming hours he passed in prison.
Released at last, he told his heart to her,
And Rachel learned to yield him love for love;
So, Saul consenting gladly, they were wed.

The eldest-born of Rachel now was grown
A stripling youth, in face and person fair,
Fair spoken, with a winning gift of grace
In manner, and a conscious innocence,
Becoming conscious virtue, written free
In legend over all his lineaments,
Where beamed likewise a bright intelligence,
Alert, beyond such years, with exercise;
For Rachel's had been long a widow's child,
And long that widow's only, as her first.
Stephen they had named their boy — for memory.

It still was dark, deep dark before the dawn,
When Rachel rose from wrestling sleepless dream

To rouse her son from happy dreamless sleep.
"Stephen," said she, "my son, my heart divines
Danger nigh imminent for one we love."

"But, mother," said the son, "mine uncle Paul,
If him thou meanest, is safe in citadel.
Those Romans, heathen though they be, and void
Of pity as the nether millstone is,
Are yet in their hard way, and heathen, just.
They have the power, as they have shown the will,
To keep thy brother hedged from Hebrew hate."

"From Hebrew hate, but not from hellish guile,"
Rachel replied; "and hellish guile, my son,
Thy mother's heart, quickened with sisterhood,
And, from some sad experience of the world,
Suspicious — nay, perhaps, through deep divine
Persuasion by the Holy Spirit wrought,
Intuitive of the future, and on things
Else hidden, inly privileged to look —
Yea, hellish guile, my heart, somehow advised,
Insists and still insists she knows, she feels,
This hour at work against my brother Saul.
Haste, get thee quickly to Gamaliel —

Brief his sleep is, and he will be awake,
For, with his gathering years, now nigh five score,
Lighter and lighter grow his slumbers, ever
Broken and scattered by the first cockcrow —
Greet him from me with worship as beseems,
And, telling him my fears, entreat to know
If aught that touches his old pupil Saul,
Haply an issue from the brooding brain
Of Shimei to Saul's hurt, have reached his ear.
Be wise, be wary, Stephen, whet thy sense,
Fail not to see or hear whatever sign
Glimpses or whispers, smallest hint that may
Concern the safety of thine uncle Saul.
How knowest thou but thy scouting walk this morn
Shall rescue to the world, in need so deep,
Yet many a year of that apostleship?
Besides, with such a sun quenched from our sky,
What then were day prolonged but night to us?
Go, and thy mother here meanwhile will pray:
'Lord, speed my son, make him discreet and
brave!'"

Brave and discreet the boy had need to be;
For, as he went, amid the rear-guard dense

Of darkness undispersed before the dawn,
Steering his flying steps along the street,
And watching wary, with tense eye and ear,
To every quarter of the dim dumb world —
A sudden thwarting ray that disappeared!
He paused on tiptoe, leaning forward, stood
One instant, with his hand behind his ear,
To listen, while his noisy heart he hushed;
And heard, yea, footsteps, with a muffled sound
Of human voices sibilant and hoarse.
What meant it? Nothing, doubtless, yet well were
To be unseen, and see — if see he might —
And hear unheard, until his way were sure.
With supple swift insinuation, he
Slipped him beneath the slack ungathered length
Of a chance-left rolled tent-cloth at his feet.
Two men — one bore a lantern, darkened deep
Behind the outer garment that he wore —
Drew nigh, and Stephen held his breath to hear
The name of Saul hissed out between the twain.
Slow was their gait, and ever and anon,
Halting, they checked their words, and seemed to list,
As if for comrades lingering yet behind.

They against Stephen halted thus, and he
Lay breathlessly awaiting what might fall.
First having paused, as hearkening from afar —
To naught but silence — the two men sat down
Upon that roll of tent-cloth, thus at ease
To rest them, till the waited-for appeared.
At Stephen's very ear, he in duress
And forced to hear them, there those two ill men,
Complotters in the plot to murder Paul,
Unfolded in free converse all their scheme.

Fiercely the listening boy forbade to cry
The aching heart of eagerness in him,
That almost rived with its desire of vent.
Fear for himself could not have held him mute;
Horror and hatred of that wickedness
Swelled swiftly in his breast, so huge and hard,
There must have sprung from out his lips a cry,
Sharp like an arrow cleaving from its string,
Had not great love been instant, stronger yet,
Binding his heart to burst not, and be dumb.
So there he lay as dead, so deathlike still,
Until at length — the waited-for come up —
They all went forward thence their purposed way.

Then Stephen lithely to his feet upsprung
And, sped as with his anguish, his disdain,
His indignation, to be silent — force
Pent up in him from all escape but speed —
Swift, like the roe upon the mountains, ran
To find Gamaliel, where that ancient sage
Sat on his dewy roof expecting morn.

"Rachel my mother sends Gamaliel hail,
And bids me haste to bring thee instant word!"
So Stephen, with quick-beating heart that broke
His words to pulses of sobbed sound, began:
"She says — but I, in hither coming, learned
More than my mother charged me with to thee.
Lo, wicked men of our own nation plot
This day to shed my mother's brother's blood.
They will desire the Roman to send down
Mine uncle Saul before the Sanhedrim,
To be by these examined once again;
But they will set upon him while he comes,
And so, or ever he can rescued be,
Make of mine uncle Saul a bloody corpse.
O Rabbi, master of mine uncle Saul,
Beseech thee, speak, bid me, what must I do?"

The old man bent upon the boy his brow,
And, slowly rousing without motion, said:
"The world grows gray in wickedness, my son;
What the Lord God of all intends, who knows?
Most wise is He, but deep, in many ways,
Past human finding out. Thine uncle Saul
Is hated for himself by Shimei
Yet more than for his cause. And Shimei
Is doubtless the artificer of this."
With inward adjuration then, a hand
Uplifted as in gesture to repel,
Gamaliel deeply added, "O my soul,
Into the secret of such man come not!"

Wherewith the aged tremulous lips were mute,
Though mutely moving still, as if the words
Said themselves over, again and yet again,
Within him, of that ancient fending spell.
Stephen, well-schooled in awe of the hoar head,
Stood an uneasy instant silent, then
Yielded to his untamable desire
Of action and impatience of delay.
"O Rabban," he importunately cried,
"But thy young servant's soul already God

Into the secret of this man has brought—
Doubtless to baffle him—knew I but how!"

"Yea, verily, Stephen; also that might chance,"
Gamaliel answered with benignity;
He almost let grave admiration breathe,
Through softly-lighted look and gentle tone,
A kind of benediction on the boy,
As he, unhastened, felt the youthful haste
That made the stripling Stephen beautiful;
"For David was a shepherd lad, when he
Was chosen of God to lay Goliath low.
Who knows but thou shalt save thine uncle Saul?
I loved him long ago—when thou wast not;
He went his way, and I abode in mine,
Ways widely parting, but I love him still.
And I would see him yet before I die.
Tell him, Gamaliel would see Saul once more.
Perhaps, perhaps, I might dissuade him yet.
Thine uncle, lad, was ever from a youth
Headstrong to think his thought and will his will.
No man might bend him from his own fixed bent;
If any man, then I; he honored me,
And hearkened reason from Gamaliel's lips.

Yea, send Saul hither, I would prove if I
Have not still left some saving power for him."

Gamaliel spoke half as from reverie,
Lapsed in oblivion of the present need.
" Rabban Gamaliel," bold upspoke the boy,
" Thy saving power I pray thee now put forth
To pluck mine uncle from the jaws of death.
I promise gladly then to bring thee Saul,
If so I may, when, by thy counsel, I
Have set him safe from those that seek his blood.
These have their mouth agape already now,
Their throat an open sepulcher for him.
I see, I see them spring upon their prey —
O master, master, must he die like this ? "

The passionate pleading boy dropped on his knees,
And the knees clasped of the thus roused old man.
" Yea, I remember," now Gamaliel spoke ;
" Weep not, my boy, but haste, my bidding do."
Therewith Gamaliel clapped his aged hands,
When instantly a servant to his call
Stood on the roof with, " Master, here am I."
" An inkhorn and a pen, with parchment ; speed ! "
Shot from Gamaliel's lips, so short, so sharp

With instance, that the man not went, but flew.
" Make thou a table of my knees, and write,"
Gamaliel to forestalling Stephen said ;
" Write : ' I, Gamaliel, send this lad to thee ;
I know him ; he will tell thee what concerns
Thy hearing ; thou canst trust him all in all.'
There, so is well ; now superscribe it fair :
' To the chief captain of Antonia.'
Run, carry this — stay, I must sign it first
With mine own hand for certainty to him.
Up, haste thee to the castle, ask for Saul,
Him tell what thou hast learned, and show him this ;
Saul will to the chief captain get thee brought,
And thou hereby shalt win believing heed.
No thanks, and no farewell, but thy feet wing ! "

So sped, but of his own heart better sped,
Stephen quick got him to the castle gate,
Where, with Gamaliel's seal displayed — his truth,
Patent in face and voice, admitting him —
He gained prompt privilege of speech with Paul.
Paul heard the tidings that his nephew brought
And, summoning a centurion, said to him :

"Pray thee, to the chief captain take this youth;
He has a matter for his private ear."

So the centurion, taking Stephen, went
To the chief captain, and thus spoke to him:
"The prisoner Paul bade me to him and asked
That I would bring this youth to thee, who has
A certain matter he would tell thee of."

The chiliarch looked at Stephen glowing there
Before him in the beauty of his youth,
A beauty that was more than beauty now,
Touched and illumined into nobleness
By the pure ardor of the soul within
Kindling upon the face in flames of zeal —
The Roman, on the boy ennobled so
Feasting his eye a moment in fixed gaze,
Caught the contagion of that nobleness.
A waft perhaps of reminiscence waked
Blew soft and warm upon his heart from Rome;
Clear in the mirror of the Hebrew boy
Shining in sudden apparition so,
Fairer than fountain of Bandusia,
There swam perhaps an image to the eye

Of that stern Roman father, dear with home;
Perhaps he thought of a young Claudius,
Who, far away beneath Italian skies,
Was blooming crescent in a grace like that,
His father exile in Jerusalem!

However wrought on, Claudius Lysias,
Touched somehow to a mood of gentleness,
Took Stephen by the hand and went with him
Apart a little into privacy,
And said: "And now, my pretty Hebrew lad,
What matter is it thou hast hither brought?"
"O, sir," said Stephen, with half-downcast face
Of beautifying shame that he must bear
Such witness unto Roman against Jew,
"There are some Israelites not of Israel;
Pray thee, judge not my race by this that I
Must tell thee of my wicked countrymen.
Forty vile men have in Jerusalem,
By one the vilest who knows all the vile,
Been found to bind themselves by oath in league
Together all, under a dreadful curse,
Neither to eat nor drink, till they the best,
The noblest, of their countrymen have slain

Thy prisoner Paul. These presently will ask,
Or others speaking for them will — high climbs,
Sir, and wide spreads, this foul conspiracy
Of evil against good, among the Jews —
They soon will ask that thou to-morrow bring
Thy prisoner before the Sanhedrim
As of his cause to certify thyself.
But, while he comes, those base complotters will,
Lying in wait for this, upon him fall
Too quickly for the soldiers to forefend,
And slay him as beneath thy very eyes.
O, sir, do not thou give them their desire."

"Thou lookest truth, my boy," the chiliarch said;
"But a mad bloody plot thou warnest me of.
Thou knowest these things? But how these things
knowest thou?
And how shall *I* know that thou knowest these
things?
How, too, that thou speakest truly as thou knowest?"

"My mother is Paul's sister," Stephen said,
"And she, all in her secret heart, divined
Some mischief that impended over him,
And bade me hasten to the wise and good

Gamaliel, counsellor to her and all,
And ask if he knew aught, or aught advised,
That touched the safety of her brother; he
Was once Gamaliel's pupil well-beloved.
It came to pass, as I devoured my way
Through the deep dark before the earliest dawn,
Whetted to heed whatever might be sign
Of import to the purpose I would serve,
That a low noise of voices, and a ray,
Shot, so it after proved, athwart the night
From out a lantern, for an instant bare,
That some one carried underneath his robe,
And, by pure hap, or haply for a hint
From far to comrade, or to light his course,
Let shine that moment through the parted folds—
It chanced, I say, that such a sudden sign—
For sign I found it—made me haste to hide
Where I, unmarked, might mark, both eye and ear.
O, sir, God sent those wicked twain so nigh
Me I could plainly hear them, every word,
Unfold the counsel of their wickedness.
As soon as freed by their departure, I
Flew to Gamaliel, told him all, from him
At last received instruction and strict charge

To hasten hither, seek out Paul, access
Secure through him to thee, and in thine hand
Give this, Gamaliel's word, for proof of me."

Stephen stood silent, and the chiliarch read;
"Aye, as I thought," he slowly, musing, spoke;
"I did not doubt thy truth, my boy, before,
I myself did not, though the chiliarch did,
As by his office bound to scruple deep,
And ever doubt, till doubt by proof be quelled.
This well agrees with the wild, heady way
Of the whole restless, reckless race of Jews.
They count no cost, of peril, or of pain,
Loss, labor, naught; impossibility
Is but temptation to attempt — in vain.
Was never city like Jerusalem,
Menace of mob in every multitude!
Well, well, my lad, I trust thee, go thy way,
Say naught of this to any one abroad;
I will take care no harm shall happen Paul.
Thou hast well done to bring this word to me;
I should have felt it for a vexing thing
Had thus a Roman in my custody
Disgracefully been slain with violent hands.

But thou it seems lovest thy kinsman Paul;
Now for thy youth, and for thy comely face,
And for the service thou hast wrought for me,
I give thee thy request, what wilt thou have?
Be prudent, so that I need not repent,
And, so that thou need not repent, be bold.
Ask widely, wisely, for thine uncle Paul."

"I thank thee, sir, for this thy grace to me,"
Said Stephen; "but for Paul I nothing ask,
Sure as I am he has what he desires;
For he has learned in whatsoever state
He be, therein to be content—so I
Have heard mine uncle say, in telling what,
Strange hap and hard to me it often seemed,
Has him befallen in wandering through the world.
Still, if I might two things in one desire,
Though not for Paul, yet partly for his sake,
I this would crave from thee, that I may here
Bide with mine uncle, or with him go hence,
If hence thou sendest him; that is one thing;
And this the other is, that I may bid
Gamaliel hither, here to visit Paul.
Gamaliel wishes to see Paul once more,

And Paul I know would gladly yet again
Greet his belovéd master face to face.
Doubtless the last time it will be to them;
For he, Gamaliel, waxes very old,
Almost five score the tale is of his years."

"Thou askest little; all is granted thee,"
The Roman said, and that centurion charged:
"Let this lad come and go, unchecked, at will,
Or bide companion with the prisoner Paul."
"And thou, my little Hebrew," added he,
Apart, "behooves thou know the time is short
For Paul to tarry in Antonia.
This very night, I send him forth with haste
To Cæsarea from Jerusalem;
Both for his safety, and my quiet, this.
Thou shalt go with him, if thou choose to go.
Remember that I trust thee, and be dumb."

Benignantly dismissed thus, Stephen first
Home hied him to his mother Rachel, her
Told what had fallen and comforted her heart;
Then to Gamaliel bore the chiliarch's word,
Bidding him freely come to visit Paul.

BOOK II.

PAUL AND GAMALIEL.

THE aged Gamaliel has his wish and enjoys a prolonged interview with the prisoner Paul in the castle where the latter is confined — young Stephen being present. The result is Gamaliel's conversion to Christianity; but this is followed by the old man's peaceful death on the couch where he had been resting while he talked. So peaceful is the death that, in the darkness of the late evening, Paul and young Stephen are not aware that it has occurred.

PAUL AND GAMALIEL.

His eye now dim, as too his natural force
Abated—for the long increase of years,
Each lightly like a gentle white snow-shower
Descending on his shoulders scarcely felt,
Grew a great weight at length that his tall form
Stooped, and his steps made gradually slow—
Gamaliel, stayed in hand by Stephen, walked,
Gazed on of all with worship where he passed
Gathering the salutations of the street,
Meet revenue of his reverend age and fame,
Until he entered at Antonia gate.
Paul met his master with a welcoming kiss,
Then led him forward to a couch, whereon
The aged man his limbs to rest composed.
There kneeling by him, Paul upon his neck
Wept in warm tears the pathos of his love.

"O great and gentle master of my youth,
Rabban Gamaliel, Saul, in many things

Other than he was erst, is still the same
In his old love and loyalty to thee!"
Such words Paul found, when he his heart could tame
From inarticulate passion into speech.

"Yea, changed, my son, in many things art thou,"
Gravely Gamaliel framed reply to Paul,
"In many things changed, and in some things much.
Thou too, my son, art older grown, like me —
Nay, like me, not. Thou art but older; I,
Past being older, now am truly old.
Yet old art thou beyond thy proper years;
Life has been more than lapse of time to thee,
To bleach the youthful raven of thy locks
To such a whiteness as of whited wool;
And all thine aspect is of winter age,
Closed without autumn on short summer time.
It should not grieve me, but indeed it grieves,
To see thee thus before thy season old.
I could have wished to live myself in thee,
Hereafter, a long life of use again,
As that good Hillel lived — not worthily —
Again in me, Gamaliel, hastening hence,

I now, less happy, none inheriting me.
As my soul's son, O Saul, I counted thee,
Thee, chosen of all my pupils to such kin;
That thou, of all, shouldst separate thyself
From the good part, and from thy father's side,
To choose thy lot with aliens and with foes!
What ruin of what hope! Already now,
The prime, the flower, the glory, of the strength
Unmatchable for promise that was Saul,
Spent, squandered, irrecoverably waste!
Nor this even yet the worst; for, worse than waste,
Saul has all used to rend what was to mend,
To scatter what to gather need was sore,
And what asked wise upbuilding to pull down.
O Saul, Saul, Saul, my son, what hast thou wrought!
O Israel, O my people, this from Saul!"

The old man shook, ceasing, with tearless sobs,
And in hands trembling hid his face from Paul.
Paul silently a moment bowed himself —
Like blinded Samson leaning hard against
The pillars of the palace of the lords
Philistine, so Paul bowed himself against
The pillars of Gamaliel's house of trust,

In one great throe and agony of prayer;
Then said: "O thou hoar head most reverend,
My master, how those words of thine pierce me!
Far, far more easily have I born all ills,
Though many and heavy, that on me have fallen,
Than now such words I hear of pained reproach,
Thrice grievous as thus gracious, from thy lips.
How shall I find wherewith to answer thee?
I think thou knowest, my master, that I love
My nation, and a thousand times would die
To save from death my kindred in the flesh.
Not willingly do I seem even to rend
The oneness of my people so asunder.
Scatter I do not, if I seem to scatter:
I sift and choose, and cast the bad away;
That is not scattering, it is gathering rather.
Nor is it I do this, but by me God.
Reprobate silver still some souls will be,
And rightly so men call them, for the Lord,
He hath rejected them, the judging Lord.
This is that word of Malachi fulfilled —
Whom also thou, O master, once, inspired
Perhaps, beyond our dreaming, from the Lord,
Recalledst, when our seventy elders sat

Consulting how most prudently they might
Slay those apostles of the Nazarene.
Thou warnedst us more wisely than our hearts
Were meekly wise enough, enough to heed.
For, 'The Lord cometh,' saidst thou then, and,
'Who
Of us,' thou askedst, 'who of us shall bide
The day of that approach?' 'Not surely he,'
Thou answeredst, prophet-wise, 'surely not he,
Then found in arms against God and His Christ.'
And did not Malachi foretell that He,
The Angel of the covenant, should sit
As a refiner and a purifier,
To purge the sons of Levi of their dross?
So sits He now, attending in the heavens,
Until appear a people purified,
Israel gathered out of Israel,
A chosen peculiar people for Himself.

"Thou knowest how I hated once this name,
And persecuted to the death His church.
I raged against Jehovah; mad and blind,
On the thick bosses of His buckler rushed.
But He, Jehovah, met me in the way

With His sword drawn and slew me where I stood.
One stroke, like living lightning, and I fell;
Saul was no more, but in his stead was Paul."

Paul therewith paused, awaiting; for he saw
A motion change the listener's attitude.
Gamaliel turned toward Paul, and looked at him,
A grave, a sad, inquiry in the gaze.
"What dost thou mean?" almost severely he,
With something of his magisterial wont,
Inveterate, in the gesture of his eye
And in his tone expressed, now said to Paul:
"What dost thou mean? Thou riddlest thus with me.
The Lord slew thee, then made alive again
Not thy slain self, but some new other man!
Meet is it thou shouldst speak in parable
Thus to thy master in his hoary age?
Plain, and forthwith, what meanest thou, son Saul?"

"I would not vex with darkened words thine ear,
My master," gently deprecated Paul;
"But otherwise how can I, than in words
Dark-seeming, frame of things ineffable

Shadow or image only? God revealed
His Son in me; thenceforth no longer I
Lived, but Christ in me. I am not myself.
The self that once was I, was crucified
With Jesus on that cross, with Jesus then
Was buried, and with Jesus rose again,
To be forever other than before.

"I journeyed to Damascus glorying,
In my old heart, the heart thou knewest for Saul,
Against the name, and those that owned the name,
Of Jesus, to destroy them from the earth.
But Jesus, in a terror of great light,
Met me and smote me prostrate on the ground.
A voice therewith I heard, the voice was wide,
And all my members seemed one ear to hear
That voice, which shone too, like the light around
Me that had quenched the midday sun; it pressed
At every pore with importunity
So dreadful that the world became a sound:
'Saul, Saul, why art thou persecuting me?'
'Who art thou, Lord?' my trembling flesh inquired.
'Jesus I am whom thou dost persecute,'
I heard through all my members in reply.

"I cannot tell thee, master, how my soul,
All naked of its flesh investiture,
Lay quivering to the touch of sight and sound.
Into annihilation crushed, my pride,
My pride, my hate, the fury of my zeal,
The folly and the fury of my zeal
Against God and His Christ, were not, and I
Myself was not, but Christ in me was all.
Thenceforth to me to live was Christ, and Christ
None other than that Man of Calvary,
The Jesus whom we crucified and slew.
Rabban Gamaliel, then knew I that God
Had visited His people otherwise
Than we were used to dream that He would come,
In glory, and in splendor, and in power,
To overwhelm our enemies, and us
To the high places of the earth lift up.
Yea, otherwise, far otherwise, than so,
Had our God visited His people — hid
That glory which no man could see and live —
Sojourning in the person of one born
Lowly, to teach us that the lowly place,
And not the lordly, is for us to choose.
Whoso the lowly place shall choose, and, prone

Before Jehovah humbled to be man
In Jesus Christ of Nazareth, fall down
To worship, and, believing, to obey,
Him will the Lord God show Himself unto,
Since unto such He can, such being like
Himself and able to behold His face."

Silence between them, silence filled to Paul
With intercession of the Spirit, He
In groanings that could not be uttered praying;
And to Gamaliel silence filled with awe.

A pride not inaccessible to touch
From the divine, and not incapable
Of moments almost like humility,
Was nature to Gamaliel that sometimes
Renewed him in his spirit to a child.
He lay now like an infant tremulous
That feels the motion of the mother's breast,
But other motion, of its own, has not.
The awful powers of the world to come,
Benign but awful, brooded over him;
Eternity a Presence watching Time!

Such breathless silence of the elder twain

Left audible the breathing of the boy,
Young Stephen, who, worn weary with his hours
Of over-early anxious walk and watch,
Had found the happy haven, ever nigh
To youth and health and innocence o'erwrought,
And dropped his anchors in the sounds of sleep.
Thus then stretched out remiss upon the floor,
As if unconscious body without soul,
Lay Stephen slumbering there, beside those two
So wakeful that each might in contrast seem
Soul only, without body, soul disclad.
A blast, not loud, of trumpet sudden blown
For signal, and a clangor as of stir
Responsive from the mailéd feet of men,
Broke on the stillness from the court without.
Gamaliel, rousing from his reverie,
Gazed deep on Paul, who met his master's eye —
Gazed long and deep with slow-perusing look.

"Look on me, Saul, and let me look on thee,"
At length Gamaliel said, "look on thee still;
Steady thine eye, if that thou canst, my son,
And my look take, unruffled, like a spring
Sunken beneath the winging of the wind;

Stay, let me sound within thee to the deeps,
And touch the bottom of thy being, there
At leisure with mine eye the truth explore.
Be pure and simple, if thou mayest; cloud not
My seeing with aught other than sincere,
Nor cross with baffling thwart perversity."

Gamaliel, leaning on his elbow, fast
His aged vision, like an eagle's, fixed
On Paul, and through the windows of his soul,
Wide open, as into a crystal sky
Gazing, beheld his thoughts orbed into stars.
Half disappointed and half satisfied,
The gazer slowly let the look intense
Fade from his eyes, and pass into a deep
Withdrawn expression, as of one who sees,
Unseeing, things without, and wraps his mind
In contemplations of an inward world.

"No conscious falseness," murmured he, aloud,
Yet inly, as communing with himself;
"No conscious falseness there, the same clear truth
That ever was the character of Saul;
No falseness, and no subtle secret flaw,
Unconscious, in the soundness of the mind;

The same sane sense that marked him from of old.
He has been deceived; how could he be deceived?
That light which fell around him at mid-noon,
Who counterfeited that? It might have been
Force from the sun that smote him in the brain,
As he was smitten whom Elisha healed,
That son of promise to the Shunammite —
Nay, that had made a darkness, and not light,
To him, and dulled his senses not to hear,
And dulled his fancy not to feign, such voice
As that which spake so dreadfully to him.
Astounding voice, that uttered human speech
And yet, like thunder, occupied the world!
Did Saul discern the tongue in which it spake?
Perhaps some mere illusion of the mind,
Whimsical contradiction to the thought
That had so long been uppermost therein,
Imposed itself upon him for the truth;
Perhaps some automatic stroke reverse
Of overwrought imagination made
A momentary, irresponsible
Conceit of fancy seem a fact of sense;
Perhaps, not hearing, he but deemed he heard.
If he distinguished clearly what the tongue

Was of the voice that spake, then — I will ask
And see. Those words, Saul, which thou seemedst
to hear,
What were they, Greek or Hebrew? Didst thou
heed
So as to mark the manner of the speech,
Or peradventure but the meaning take?"

"Hebrew the words were, master," Saul replied;
"If ever it were possible for me
To lose them from my memory, mine ear
Would hear their haunting echo evermore.
Such light, such sound, forsake the senses never.
O master, when God speaks to man, doubt not
He finds the means to certify Himself.
Let Him now certify Himself to thee,
Through me, me the least worthy of such grace,
To be ambassador of grace from Him!"

Paul's words were not so eloquent as Paul.
He to such conscious noble dignity
Joined such supreme effacement of himself;
Burned with such zeal devoid of eagerness;
A manner of entreaty that was his,
Not for his own, but all for other's sake,

Made such a sweet chastised persuasiveness,
From self-regarding purpose purified;
Meekness of wisdom such clothed on the man
With an investiture of awfulness;
While, fairer yet, a most unworldly light,
A soft celestial radiancy, diffused,
Self-luminous, illuminating all,
The light divine of supernatural love,
Upon him from a sacred source unseen
Flung such a flush, like sunrise on some peak
Of lonely height first to salute the sun;
That Paul, to whoso had beholding eyes,
Shone as a milder new theophany.

Gamaliel had not eyes for all he saw.
He slowly from his leaning posture sank
Relapsed upon the couch, clasping his hands.
Half to himself and half to Paul, he spoke:
"My mind is sore divided with itself.
It is as if the heavenly firmament
Were shifted half way round upon its pole,
And east to west were changed, and west to east;
All things seem opposite to what they were.
Strange, strange, incomprehensible to me!

But strangest, most incomprehensible,
Thou, what thou art to what thou wast, O Saul!
Thou wast, though ever not ungentle, proud
Ever, the proudest of the Pharisees.
I loved thee, I admired thee, for thy pride.
Pride did not seem like arrogance in thee,
But meet assumption of thy proper worth;
Rather, such air in thee, as if thou woredst
A mantle of thy nation's dignity,
Committed by the suffrages of all
Unto the worthiest to be worthily worn.
And now this Saul, our paragon of pride,
Through whom our suffering nation felt herself
Uplifted from the dust of servitude,
In prophecy by example, to her true,
Long-forfeited inheritance, to be
One day restored to her, of regal state—
This Saul I see beside me here a gray
Old man humbling himself, humbling his race,
In abject posture of prostration bowed
Before—whom? Why, nobody in the world!
Before—what? Why, the phantom of a man
Led through low life to malefactor's death!
Impossible transformation, to have passed

Upon that proud high Saul whom once I knew;
Impossible perversion, baffling me!
Impossible, but that with mine own eyes,
But that with mine own ears, I witness it."

In simple helpless wonder and amaze
More than in wroth rejection scorn-inspired,
Gamaliel thus had uttered forth his heart.
Paul had his answer, but he held it back,
Respectfully awaiting further word
Seen ripe and ready on Gamaliel's lips.
A question, still of wonder, soon it came:
"Tell me, what hast thou gained, in all these years
Of thy most strange discipleship, my son?"

A pathos of compassion tuned the tone
With which Gamaliel so appealed to Paul.
Paul, with a pathos of sweet cheerfulness,
In dark and bright of paradox replied:
"Gained? I have gained of many things great store;
Much hatred from my erring countrymen;
Much chance of thankless service for their sake;
Stripes many, manacles, imprisonments,
Beatings with rods, bruisings with stones, shipwrecks,
A night and day of tossing in the deep;

Far homeless wanderings up and down the world;
Perils on perils multiplied, no end,
Perils of water — wave and torrent flood —
Perils by mine own countrymen enraged,
Perils from heathen hands, perils pursued
Upon me, ceasing not, wherever men
In city gather, or in wilderness;
In the waste sea, still perils; perils still
Among false brethren; these, and weariness
With painfulness, long watchings without sleep,
Hunger and thirst endured, oft fastings fierce,
Cold to the marrow, shuddering nakedness.
Such things without, to wear and waste the flesh,
And then beside, the suffering of the spirit
In care that comes upon me day by day
For all the scattered churches of the Lord.
I have not missed good wages duly paid;
Gain has been mine in every kind of loss."

Paul's answer turned Gamaliel's sentiment
Into pure wonder, pity purged away.
Deeper and deeper in perplexity
Sank the old man, the more in thought he strove;
As when the swallow of a quicksand sucks

Downward but faster one who writhes in vain.
Silent he listening lay, and Paul went on:
"I have thus counted as the vain world counts,
Summing the gains of my apostleship.
I myself reckon otherwise than thus.
For, what was gain to me, in that old state
Wherein thou knewest thy disciple Saul,
This count I now but only loss and dross,
Yea, all things count but dross, all things save one,
To know Christ Jesus, and be known of Him.
That knowledge is the one true treasure mine;
True, for eternal; mine, for not the world,
Nor life, nor death, nor present things, nor things
To come, nor height, nor depth, nor aught beside
Created in the universe of God,
Can from me wrest this one true good away.
I have had sorrow, but amid it joy;
Pain has been mine, but hidden in it peace;
Rest, deeper than the weariness, has still
My much-abounding weariness beguiled;
Immortal food my hunger has assuaged,
And drink of everlasting life, my thirst.
I have sung praises in imprisonment,
At midnight, with my feet fast in the stocks,

And my back bleeding raw from Roman rods;
So much the spirit of glory and of power
Prevailed to make me conqueror of ill.
Tossed in whatever sea of bitterness,
Wide as the world, and weltering with waves,
A fountain of sweet water still I find
Fresh as from Elim rising to my lips.
A parable in paradox, sayest thou,
But —"

Stephen here his eyes wide open laid
And looked a look of simple love on Paul.
His sleep had sudden-perfect been, as night
At the equator instantly is dark;
And now, as day at the equator dawns
Full splendor, and no twilight of degrees,
So Stephen was at once and all awake.
He straight, without surprise, remembered all,
Or, needing not remember, recognized.
Paul caught his nephew's upward look of love,
And sheathed it in the light of his own eyes,
Which, downward bent a moment on the boy,
Gave him his gift with usury again.
"Behold," said Paul, "my parable made plain

By parable not dark with paradox.
A sea of bitterness was yesterday
Poured round me in that madding multitude
That tossed me on the shoulders of its waves;
But here is this my loving nephew, Stephen,
A fountain of sweet water in the sea —
Art thou not, Stephen? — whence to drink my fill.
But this is parable of parable;
No more — for what I mean is still to speak.
Know, then, there is no earthly accident
Of evil that has happened me, or can
Happen, nay, and no swelling flood of such,
Of any power at all to touch with harm
The peace that passeth understanding, fixed
By Jesus in my inward firmament;
The sea less vainly might assail the stars."

"If this thou meanest," Gamaliel, groping, said,
"That when the angry people yesterday
Bore thee headlong and menaced death to thee,
Then thou wert calm at heart, feeling no fear —
What else were that than boasting, 'I am brave,'
Which but such vaunt of it could bring in doubt?"

"Nay, master," Paul said, "braggart am I not,

As justly thou hast signified no brave
Man can be; and the peace whereof I speak
Is not the calmness that the brave man drinks
Out of the cup of danger at his lips.
That also I perhaps have sometimes known;
But this is other, and a mystery
Even to myself, who only have, and not
The secret of the having understand —
Save that I know it no virtue, but a gift
Renewed forever from the grace of Christ."

Gamaliel listened deeply, with shut eyes;
He listened, and kept silence, and then sighed,
A long, considerate sigh, and unresolved.
His struggling reason could not right itself;
It staggered like a vessel in the sea
That cuff and buffet of the storm has left
A hulk, dismasted, rudderless, forlorn,
Wedged between waves rocking her to and fro,
And threatening to engulf her in the deep;
So there Gamaliel swayed, with surge on surge
Of thought and passion sweeping over him,
Till now he trembled on the point to sink.
Paul saw the old man's state, and, pitying him,

Knew how to shed a balm upon the waves.
With a low voice, daughter of silence, he
Slowly intoned a soft, melodious psalm:
"'Not haughty is my heart, O God the Lord,
'Nor do mine eyes ambitiously aspire;
'In great affairs I exercise me not,
'And not in things too wonderful for me.
'Yea, I have stilled and quieted my soul;
'As with its mother a new-weanéd child,
'So is my soul a weanéd child with me.
'O Israel, hope thou, in Jehovah hope,
'From this time forth and even forevermore!'"

The mood, all melting, of that monody—
Less monody, than sound of sobbing ceased—
Its cradling gentle lullaby to pride,
Went, subtly permeant, through Gamaliel's soul,
And mastered it to sympathy of calm.
Paul saw with pleasure this effect, and wished
The too much shaken old man venerable
Might taste the soothing medicine of sleep.
Not pausing, he, with ever softer tone
Verging toward silence, over and over again
Crooned like a cradle melody that psalm;

Till, as that vexing spirit in Saul the king
Once yielded to young David's harping, so
Now even the fluttering of the aged flesh
Owned a strange power reverse to cancel it,
Hid in the vibrant pulsing of Paul's voice,
Its flexures and its cadences, that matched
The meaning with the music; lulled to rest,
Gamaliel lightly, like an infant, slept.

"Hist! Haste!" So Paul to Stephen signed
and said;
"Hence, and bring hither quickly bread and wine,
Wherewith to cheer Gamaliel when he wakes;
He sleeps now, weary with unwonted thought."

Shimei saw Stephen from the fort come out
And bear purveyance back of bread and wine;
So, earlier, he had seen Gamaliel pass,
Led by the hand of Stephen, through the gate,
Presumably to visit Paul within.
For he, as ever when some crime he teemed,
Uneasy till the full-accomplished birth,
Was like the hungry hunting hound denied
Access to his wished prey, known to be near—

Though thus from touch, as too from sight, withdrawn,
And only by the teaséd nostril snuffed —
Who cannot cease from patient jealous watch,
On haunches sitting, or on belly prone,
Lest somehow yet he miss his taste of blood —
So that ill spirit all day had scented Paul,
Shut up within the castle out of reach,
And sedulously studied, at remove,
Whatever might be token of attempt,
Other's or his, the morrow's doom to cheat.
The very thought, 'Should he slip through our hands!'
Was anguish, like a goad, to Shimei,
Who now was sure he had the hope divined
That Paul was harboring — an escape by night!
'Paul, in the darkness, stealing out disguised
As old Gamaliel, would, with meat and drink
Supplied him, safety seek in distant flight.'
Filled with such thought, the tireless crafty Jew,
Colluding with the sentry at the gate,
There sat him down the sentry's watch to share;
Paul should by no such stratagem avoid
The vengeance that next morrow waited him.

But Paul and Stephen, guileless, of the guile
Imputed dreamed not; they with happy thought
Contented them until Gamaliel woke.
Then when Gamaliel woke, they gave him wine,
Pure from the grape, so much as heartened him,
And bread that strengthened him, from fasting faint.
Discourse then followed, eased with many a change
From theme to theme, from mood to mood diverse,
Until the long daylight was waned away,
And twilight deepened round them talking still.

Gamaliel, in whatever various vein
Of converse with his outward mind employed,
Was ever, in his deeper inward mind,
Resistlessly drawn backward to the doubt,
The question, the perplexity, the fear,
'Saul—is he right? And is Gamaliel wrong?
And have I missed to know the Christ of God?'
He gazed abstractedly on Paul, beheld
So different; less in outer aspect changed—
Although therein, too, other—than in act,
In gesture and in attitude of soul,
The spirit and the motive of the man,
Transfigured from the pride that once was Saul.

"I do not know thee, Saul," at length he said;
"Nay, nay, not Saul — I should not call him Saul,
This is some different man from him I knew,
In other years long gone, and called him Saul!
Such difference in the same the sameness makes
Impossible. Impossible, but that
The sameness still in difference survives
Persistently. The impossible itself
I must believe — when I behold it."

"Yea,"
Paul said, "and more, the impossible become,
When God so wills it; as for me He willed!
My life these many years, my self, has been
One contradiction of the possible.
The reconcilement of all things in Christ
Is God the Blessed's purpose and decree.
For God delights in the impossible."

Gamaliel did not heed, but murmuring spoke,
In absent deep communion with himself:
"Saul, Paul, the same still, and so changed, so changed!
And cause of change none other than that stroke,
That lightning-stroke he tells of, launched on him

From out a cloudless sky at blazing noon!
Whence, and what was it, that stupendous blow!
Would He have lied Who flashed it blinding down?
Or suffered any liar to claim it his?
And the dread Voice made answer: 'It is I,
Jesus of Nazareth, the Crucified.'
Lo, my whole head is sick, my whole heart faint,
Turned dizzy with the whirl of many thoughts —
Thoughts many, and too violently strange,
For a worn-weary aged mind like mine!
I feel I am too feeble to abide
Much longer all this tumult of my heart;
I shall myself cease, if it does not cease.
And peradventure cease it would, could I
Stop striving, and give up to be a child.
A child once more! Ah, that in truth were sweet,
To find some bosom like a mother's, where
I might lay down my aching head to rest,
This head, so hoar, the foolish think so wise!
Old, but not wise, not wise indeed though old;
In weakness — would it were in meekness too! —
A child, leaning, with none to lean upon —
Such is Gamaliel in his hoary age!"

Besides his words, the old man's yearning look
Bore witness to the trouble of his mind.
Paul spoke — so gently that the sense he gave
Seemed to Gamaliel almost his own thought:
"'Come unto Me,' Messiah Jesus said,
'Come unto Me,' as Who had right, said, 'ye
That labor and are heavy-laden, all,
Come unto Me and I will give you rest.
My yoke upon you take, and learn of Me;
For meek am I in heart, and lowly; so
Shall ye find rest unto your souls."

From Paul
No more; for, all as if he naught had heard,
But only was remembering what he heard,
Gamaliel went on musing audibly:
'Rest' — comfortable word! But he was young
That spake thus, young, and in the law unlearned;
And of a yoke spake he, 'My yoke,' he said.
Surely I am too old to go to school,
Too reverend-old, my neck so late to bend,
A sign to all the people — stooped to take
Meekly that youngster Galilæan's yoke!
Beware, beware! I tremble at the words

I speak. I feel the dreadful presence here,
More dreadful, of the power that shook me so,
When those apostles of the Nazarene
Stood up before our council to be judged.
If I should now, this last time, err through pride!"

The murmur of Gamaliel's musing ceased;
But ceased not the strong crying without words
In Paul's heart for his master so bestead.
The solemn silence of that prison cell,
Less broken than accented by the tread
Monotonous and measured heard without
Of the dull sentry pacing to and fro
His beat along the way before the door
More like mechanic pendulum than man;
The darkness of the place now utter, night
Full come, no lamp; the awe, the dread suspense
Unspeakable of such an issue poised,
Eternity in doubtful balance there
A-tremble on a razor-edge of time —
This even on Stephen's bright young spirit cast
As if a shadow from the world to come;
He parted with it after nevermore
The vivid certainty, that moment seized,

Of an Unseen, more real, beyond the Seen.

But presently Gamaliel yet again
Mused audibly in murmur as before:
"I fear me I shall fail, and not let go
Betimes the hold I have, the hold has me,
Say rather, this fierce hold upon myself
And mine own righteousness so dearly earned,
To take the fall proposed, the shuddering fall,
Through emptiness and that waste waiting deep
Of nothing under me, in hope to reach
At last — what rescue, or what landing-place?
Rest in the arms once pinioned to the cross!
He draws me with His heavenly-uttered 'Come'!
This is God's voice; God's voice I must obey —
Yea, Lord, thy servant heareth, and I come.
I say it, but I do it not. Too late?
What if at last I prove to hold too hard
Upon myself, and not undo my hand,
Grown stiff with holding long, until too late!
These are my last heart-beats, and with the last.
The very last, what would I do? Resist?
Resist, or yield? Oh, not resist, but yield;
Lord, help me not resist, but yield, but yield —"

The faltering utterance failed, suspended; then,
To a new key transposed, went faltering on:

"This peace within my breast, the peace of God!
Jesus, Thou Son of Blesséd God Most High,
I know Thee by the token of Thy peace!
Thine is this peace, not given as by the world.
Thou wast beforehand with Thy servant; I
Had not known Thee, hadst Thou not first known me,
And hastened to be gracious, ere I died.
Thou art most gracious, and I worship Thee.
What was it Simeon said?—'Now lettest Thou
Thy servant hence depart in peace,' for I—
In peace, in peace, even I—yea, for mine eyes,
Mine also, most unworthy, have beheld
The light of Thy salvation, O my God!
Oh, peace ineffable! It seems to steal
Through all my members and dispose to rest.
I think that I will sleep; I am at peace.
My heart has quieted itself, peace, peace—"

The words died into silence audible;
Soft, like a wavelet sinking, ceased his breath,
And there Gamaliel lay, a breathless peace.

Paul joyful, knowing that his aged friend
Had found peace in believing, did not dream
That it had been the last of life for him,
The first of life indeed, Paul would have deemed;
But thinking, 'He has fallen asleep once more,'
Gave silent thanks to God and himself slept,
With Stephen then already safe asleep.

When, with the earliest dawn, four elders came,
Gamaliel's equals, to Antonia,
In reverent wise to bear him thence away,
They found the many-wrinkled brow that was,
Smoothed out most placid fair, and on the cheek
A bloomy heavenly hue, as if of youth
Revived, or immortality begun.

But Paul and Stephen, summoned to depart,
The sleeper's sleep were minded not to break;
There in the dead and middle of the night,
They knelt to kiss the forehead in farewell,
And were surprised to feel the touch was cold.

BOOK III.

SHIMEI AND THE CHILIARCH.

PAUL, accompanied by young Stephen, is started at about midnight, under strong military escort, for Cæsarea. At the gate of the castle, Shimei, lurking there, is arrested, and brought before the chiliarch, Claudius Lysias by name. A conversation ensues, in which Shimei, for a time with some success, practises on the chiliarch his characteristic arts of deception. At last, the chiliarch, denouncing him for what he is, and putting him under heavy bonds to respond in person, whenever and wherever afterward commanded by the Roman authorities, dismisses him from presence, chagrined and dismayed.

SHIMEI AND THE CHILIARCH.

Ere midnight, had reveillé to those twain
Sounded, and from brief slumber rallied them.
They passed from the surprise of that farewell
Kissed on the coolness of Gamaliel's brow—
He his reveillé waiting from the trump
Of resurrection, tranced in happy sleep!—
From this passed Paul and Stephen to the court
Without, where stood, made ready in array,
Five hundred Roman soldiers, foot and horse,
Filling the place with frequence and ferment.
Armed men, and horses in caparison,
And saddled asses thick together poured—
All was alive with motion and with sound.
There was the stamping hoof of restless steed,
The rattling bridle-rein, the bridle-bit
Champed hoary, the impatient toss of head
Shaking the mane disheveled, and with foam
Flecking the breast, the shoulder, and the flank,
Eruptive snort from nostril and from lip,
The ass's long and melancholy bray,

Horse's salute of recognition neighed
To greet some fellow welcomed in the throng,
Therewith, voices of men, scuffle of feet—
All under bickering light and shadow flung
From torches, fixed or moving, fume and flame.

To Paul and Stephen sharp the contrast was
Between that quietude and this turmoil,
Sleeping Gamaliel and these urgent men!
But Paul his peace held fast amid it all,
Peace, yet a posture girded and alert;
While Stephen, hanging on his uncle's eye,
Caught the contagion of that heedful calm.

The natural pathos of one fond regret
Ached in the heart of Paul, a hoarded pain—
His wish, denied him, to have given in charge,
Before he went, Gamaliel's lifeless form,
If to the keeping of his kindred not,
At least to Roman care and piety;
Amid the hurly-burly of the hour,
No chance of speech, with any that would heed,
For Jewish prisoner hurried thence by night!
But Paul's reveréd friend, safe fallen asleep
In Jesus, beyond care or want was blest;

Yea, and the human reverence of great death,
Toward one in death so reverend great as he,
Well might be trusted, for such clay to win,
Through kindred care, the sepulture most meet.
Yet Paul, come to Antipatris, and there
Left with the horsemen only thence to ride,
A needless careful message touching this
Gave to the chief of the returning foot.
When to the chiliarch's ear such word was brought,
That captain deeply mused it in his mind—
To find it throw a most unlooked-for light
On certain dark alternatives of doubt
That had meanwhile his judgment sore perplexed.

Lowly upon an ass they seated Paul,
And Stephen, likewise mounted, ranged beside.
Then those appointed to prick forth before,
Out through the two-leaved gate at sign withdrawn,
Were issuing on the street in order due,
When the proud prudent steed that led the way
Swerved, and, with mighty surge of rash recoil,
Had nigh his rider from the saddle thrown.
He, his fine nostril wide distended, snuffed
Suspicion on the tainted wind, and, dazed

His eyes with darkness from the glare just left
Of torchlight in the court, uncertain saw,
To the right hand beside the open port,
There on the ground, as ambushed at his feet,
A motion, or a shadow, or a shape,
Which to his careful mind portended ill.

"Halt!" rang abrupt the startling stern command;
"Seize him!" the leader of the vanguard cried,
And pointed to the skulking figure near.
Darted three soldiers from the rank of foot,
With instant light celerity—a flash
Of movement from the serried column sent
Inerrant to its aim, like lever-arm
Of long bright steel by some machine flung forth
To do prehensile office and fetch home—
Darted upon the man in hiding there,
And brought him prisoner to the chiliarch.

"Knowest thou this man?" the chiliarch asked of
Paul.
"Shimei his name, an elder of the Jews,"
Responded Paul; turning, the chiliarch then
Said: "Thou—Stephen, I think they call thee—
speak.

Thou toldst me yesterday, not naming him,
Of one all-capable of crime, the head
And chief of a conspiracy to slay;
Answer — thou needst not fear — is this the man?"
Stephen flushed shame; "The same, my lord," he said;
He dropped therewith his eyes, and head declined.

"Thou stayest," the chiliarch said to Shimei;
"On, and with speed!" he to the soldiers said.
To a centurion, then, attending him:
"Relieve the sentry set outside the port,
And hither bid the man released to me."

"What wast thou doing at thy sentry-post,
That miscreant such as this should sit him there
Unchallenged? Sleeping? Soothed perhaps to sleep
With chink of gold sweet-shaken in thine ear?"—
A perilous frown dark on his imminent brow,
The chiliarch thus bespoke the sentinel.
But with full steady eye, the man replied:
"I crave thy pardon, if, through ignorance
I erred, but I nowise forgot myself,
Or failed my duty of strict challenging.
Indeed, sir, if the man in presence be

Aught but a loyal, honest gentleman,
Then am I much deceived, and punish me;
But not for slackness or base traitorhood.
As I my oath and office understand,
I was true soldier and true sentinel."

'Sound heart, if addle head,' the chiliarch thought,
"Thy oath and office, my good sentinel—
Thou needest to understand them better," said.

The sentry, fain to clear himself, began:
"He told me"—

"Doubtless some amusing tale,"
Smiling an easy scorn, the chiliarch said.

Surging with zeal and conscious honesty,
The sentinel again his part essayed:
"He said, sir"—

"Aye, I warrant thee he did,
If but thou hearkenedst," said the chiliarch;
"Tongue seldom lacks, let ear be freely lent.
Sharp question and short answer, there an end—
That is the wisdom for the man on watch.

Words are a master snare, beware of words,
Thine own or other's, either equal fear;
No parley, is the sentinel's safe rule.
Whet up thy wits, my man, but this time — go!"

The sentry thus dismissed, retiring, shot
Into the chiliarch's ear a Parthian word:
"Beseech thee, sir, prejudge nor him, nor me;
Wait till thou hear the gentleman explain."

"Thou hast bewitched him well," to Shimei
Turning, the chiliarch said; then, with cold eye
Regarding and repelling him, exclaimed
"Hoar head, thou lookest every inch a rogue!"

Shimei had marked with a considering mind
The chiliarch's manner with the sentinel;
In dilatory parry, he replied:
"Not what we look, but what we are, we are."

"But what we are, conforms at length our looks,"
Surprised, amused, in doubt, but dallying, matched
The Roman his rejoinder. Then the Jew,
Adventuring on one more avoidance, said:
"Well dost thou say 'at length'; for it might chance
That looks were obstinate, requiring time."

"Coiner of wisdom into apothegm!
An undiscovered Seneca in sooth,
Where least expected, seems I meet to-night!
But spare to bandy sentences with me."
With change to chilling dignity from sneer,
The Roman so rebuffed the cringing Jew;
Who, cringing, yet was no least whit abashed,
But answered: "Pardon, sir, thy servant, who
Has missed his mark in his simplicity.
I thought, 'If I might spare my lord his time!'
And dutifully thereto spared my words.
The farthest was it from my humble aim
To mint my silly thought in adages.
Forgive me, if, unconsciously set on
By thy example of sententious speech—
True wisdom closed in fitting words and few—
I seemed to match my worthless wit with thine.
I have a helpless habit of the mind,
A trick of mimicry that masters me;
When I observe in them what I admire,
I can not but my betters imitate.
I fear me I have compromised my cause;
Had I been deeper, I had less seemed deep!
I lack the art to show the artless man

That in my own true self, sir, thou shouldst see.
With my superiors, I am not myself;
I take on airs, or seem to, copying them.
Quite other am I with my proper like;
I feel at home, and am the man I am.
Ask that plain-spoken, honest sentinel—
He now was my own sort, I never thought
To strain myself above my natural mark
With him; we were hail fellows, he and I,
And talked the harmless wise that such know how.
With thee—oh, sir, myself I quite forsook,
And slipped into a different Shimei.
Pity my weakness, I am sick of it;
To ape the great is folly for the small—
But small may hope forgiveness from the great!"

The chiliarch listened, unconvinced; yet charmed,
Like the bird gazing by the serpent charmed.
"Pretend that I am of thy kind," said he,
"And show me how thou with the sentry talkedst."

Now Lysias nursed a proudly Roman mind
Disdainful of all nations save his own—
Disdainfully a Roman but the more,
That he by purchase, not by birth, was such;

The nation that he ruled he most disdained.
Child of the high-bred fashion of his time,
By choice and culture he a skeptic was.
Skeptic, he yet was superstitious too,
Open and weak to supernatural fears;
He easily believed in magic powers,
Charms, sorceries, witchcrafts, incantations, spells,
And all the weird pretensions of the East.
His habit of disdain and skepticism
Made him a cynic in his views of men;
Whereby he oft, wise-seeming, was unwise.
He took upon himself laconic airs
In speech, in action airs abrupt, as who
Bold was, and strong, and from reflection deep —
The manner, rather than the matter, his.
To any chance observer of his ways
In use of office and position, these
Could but have seemed comportable and fair.
Accesses too of gentleness he had,
Wherein a strain of kindly in the man
Opened and gushed in flow affectionate,
Or well-becoming courtesy and grace.

This Roman chiliarch, Claudius Lysias, now

Found himself much at leisure and at ease,
Rid of that worrying case of prisoner strange;
Unconscious satisfaction with himself
Warmed at his heart, a pleasurable glow—
He had so neatly got it off his hands!
He was quite ready, mind acquitted thus,
Heart buoyant, to disport himself. He saw
That in the man before him he had met
No dull mere mediocrity, but one
Who, besides being ruler of the Jews,
As Paul pronounced him, had a quality,
An individual difference, all his own.
Claudius might test this man, get him to talk—
An interesting study, learn his make.
Besides the pleasure to his appetite
For piquant knowledge of his fellow-man,
It might in some way, indirect the better,
Give him a point or two of policy
To guide the conduct of his rulership
Among a people difficult to rule.
In such mood, idle, curious, partly wise,
This half-wise man, unwise through cynicism,
Gave himself leave to say to Shimei:
"Pretend that I am of thy kind, like him,

Let me hear how thou with the sentry talked."

Hardly could Shimei, through the mask he wore
Of feigned simplicity, help leering out,
Confessed the mocker that he ever was,
In that sardonic grin, as he replied:
"Pretense, of whatso sort, be far from me—
Save when my betters wish it of me; then,
I think it right to put my conscience by;
Or rather place it at their service—that,
The dearest thing the poor good man can claim!
I reason in this way, 'Why should I presume
To scruple, where those wiser far than I
Are clear?' That sure would be the worst pretense—
Pretending to be holier than the saints.
My will, thou seest, is tractable enough;
But how, with thee, to feel sufficient ease
To do what thou desirest, go right on
And talk and chatter as we simple did!

"First, then, perhaps I said: 'This is dull work'—
And no offense to thee, sir, that I said it—
'Dull work,' said I, 'to stand, or pace, and watch,
Long hours alone, and nothing like to happen

That makes it needful thou shouldst thus keep
watch!'
'Aye,' grunted he; I thought him stupid like,
But I had something I could tell him then
That might rub up his wits and brighten them.
'There is a plot,' said I. 'Aye, plots enough,'
Said he. 'And something thou shouldst know,' I said.
'I doubt,' said he; and added: 'Soldiers should
Know nothing but their duty, how to watch,
March, dig, fight, slay, be slain, and no word speak.
Thou hadst better go,' said he, like that, more frank
Than courteous, thou mightst think—he meant no
harm,
But only like a loyal soldier spoke.
I did not go, but said: 'The plot I mean
Is of escape from prison.' But he replied:
'Nobody can escape these times from prison;
The emperor has a hundred million eyes,
That never wink, because they have no lids,
And never sleep, because they never tire,
And these run everywhere and all things see;
The emperor's arms are many, long and strong,
East, west, north, south, they range throughout the
world.

Oh, he can reach thee wheresoever hiding,
And pluck thee thence and fetch thee safely home;
The world is all his prison, the emperor's.'
'Thou thinkest that?' said I. 'No doubt,' said he.
'But captives still,' said I, 'might try to escape?'
'Oh, aye,' said he, 'that is quite natural.'
'And should they try,' I said, 'with thee on watch,
And should they somehow skill to get by thee,
Then — and although they be thereafter caught —
How fares it then with thee?' said I to him —
'Yea, how with thee that lettest them go by?'
'Then there would be,' he said, 'account to give,
And I should wish I had not been on watch.'
'Nay, better wish, man, thou hadst better watched,'
Said I, 'and thyself caught the fugitive.'
'Aye, that were something better yet,' said he.
'Why, yea,' said I, 'that, laid to thy account,
Might win thee prompt promotion out of this.'
'I never dream,' said he, 'of anything
To lift me from the common soldier's lot.'
'Dreaming is idle, yea,' said I to him,
'But waking thought and action need not be.
For instance, now,' I then went on and said"—

The subtle Hebrew, drawing out his tale,
Mock-artless long, of gossip with the watch,
Had never intermitted an intent,
Considerate, sly, solicitous regard
Fixed on the chiliarch's face, therein to read
The reflex of the phases of his thought;
And now he marked with pleasure how their mere
Indifferent or incredulous cold scorn
Was fading from the haughty Roman's eyes,
Merged in a dawn of curious interest.
Disguisedly, but confidently, glad —
His course seen smooth before him to his goal —
Shimei thence eased that tension of the will
To simulate simplicity of speech,
As, more directly, his ambages spared,
He almost blithely, in his natural vein
Of fondness for the false and the malign,
Slid on, in fabrication of report,
Or in report of fabrication, thus:
"Inside those castle walls there is a man,
A Jew, one Paul, I know him very well,
Prisoner for crime that richly merits death.
The outraged people yesterday were fain
To wait no longer, but at once inflict,

Themselves, with righteous hands, the penalty.
The gentle chiliarch rescued him from them,
Not knowing, as of course how could he know?
What a base wretch he plucked from doom condign.
So here Paul is in Roman custody,
Safe for the moment, but full well aware,
As he deserves to die, that die he will,
Whenever once he shall be justly judged.
He therefore schemes it to attempt escape,
This very night, from his imprisonment.
He has his tool, tool and accomplice both,
In that young fellow thou hast seen pass by,
Entering and issuing through the castle-gate.
'Aye, I have seen him plying back and forth,'
The sentry said, 'a likely Hebrew lad;
I challenged him, but he had documents.
Wicked, ungrateful!—that good chiliarch
Had shown such grace to him for his fair looks.'
'Well, I will stay,' said I, 'and watch with thee,
And help thee foil their game, and thy chance mend.
But let us have two stout young fellows ready,
I can provide them, hidden nigh at hand—
No call for us to spend our breath in running!—
To give the prisoner chase, should need arise.

Arise it will not, if my guess is right,
And I know Paul so well, I scarce can miss.
Paul stakes his hope on craft, and not on speed;
Still, it is good to be at all points armed,
And should craft fail, there will be test of speed,
No doubt of that, since Paul would run for life,
And life is prize to make the tortoise fleet.
Paul is no stiff decrepit — far from such;
Old as his look is, he is light of heel.
Running, however, only last resort,
The desperate refuge of necessity;
Paul's main reliance is on something else,
To wit, a pretty ruse and stratagem.
A wary fellow Paul, and deep in wiles!"

Shimei was entered on a mingled vein
Of true and false reflection of his thought,
Wherein himself could scarce the line have drawn
To part the fabrication from the fact.
Partly, he thought indeed that Paul was such
As he was now describing him to be,
In image and projection of himself;
Partly, he painted an ideal mere,
Conscious creation of malicious mind.

He did uneasily believe, or fear,
That Paul would somehow cheat the malice yet
Of those who hated him; perhaps contrive
Escape by night from prison. His restless mind,
Hotbed of machination, equally
Was hotbed of suspicion and surmise.
His mere suspicion and surmise became,
To his imagination, certainty;
Or else he took, himself, for certainty,
At length, what he for certainty affirmed,
Swearing the false till he believed it true.

He thus the story of his talk prolonged:
"'Now hark thee, friend, and hear me prophesy,'
So to the worthy sentinel I said,
'Thou sawest Paul brought in, and he was Paul —
Tell me, was not he Paul, when he came in?
Aye, Paul he was, thou sayest. Well, what I say —
And this now, mark it, is my prophecy —
Paul will come out, not Paul, but some one else;
In short, will hobble forth — Gamaliel!
Gamaliel, thou must know, I said to him,
'Is the old man that lad this morn led in;
Making, forsooth, a touching sight to see,

So tenderly and gingerly the lad
Guided and stayed the steps of that old man.
A pretty acted piece of loyalty
To venerable age from blooming youth!
Watch, thou shalt see it acted over again
To-night, with haply some improvement made
On the rehearsal, when he leads out Paul.
Paul's hair and beard will not need dusting white,
Being as white as old Gamaliel's now;
But edifying it will be to mark
The careful studied totter of the step,
The tremble of the hand upon his staff,
The thin and querulous quaver of the voice,
The helpless meek dependence on his guide,
And all the various aged make-believe,
Wherewith that subtle master of deceit,
That natural, practised, life-long actor, Paul,
Will put the guise of old Gamaliel on.
'He-he!' I chuckled to the sentinel,
'To me the spectacle will be as good
And laughable, as I should guess a play,
A roaring one, of Plautus were to thee!'"

Shimei was venturing to let lapse his part

Of mere reporter to a talk supposed
Betwixt himself and the dull sentinel —
This to let lapse, or, if not quite let lapse,
Mix and confound with his own proper part,
Inveterate, unassumed, of scoffer free ;
He saw the chiliarch sink so deep immersed
In hearing and in weighing what was said,
He deemed he might thenceforward trust his speech,
With scant disguise of indirection, aimed
As frankly for a keen intelligence —
The chiliarch's own, and not the sentinel's —
To snare his listener's now less warded wit.
Paul was clean gone indeed, gone otherwise
Than through the guile that he had dared impute ;
But he, meantime, would such a chance not miss,
A golden chance that might not come again,
To prepossess the chiliarch's captive mind
With pregnant ill surmise concerning Paul.
There yet was unexhausted circumstance
Suggestively at hand, seed that but sown
Would a fine harvest of suspicion spring.

Point-blank his aim shifted to Lysias now,
He said : " Why did Gamaliel stay so long?

Why, indeed, come at all, but, having come,
Why so long tarry, wearing out the day?
Where is Gamaliel now? What did it mean
That that officious Hebrew youngster — he
Who, at Paul's wish, Gamaliel hither brought,
Who back and forth has flitted through the gate
All day, carrying and fetching as he liked —
What did it mean, I ask, that he bore in
Flagons of wine and loaves of bread? What mean?
Why, this, provision got to serve Paul's need,
When, issuing in Gamaliel's vesture, he
Should shuffle forth, Gamaliel, on the street,
To try the fortune of a runaway,
A hopeless runaway in Cæsar's world.
The clement chiliarch never would be hard
On an old dotard of a hundred years,
Found aider and abettor in such wile,
Where left behind in ward to take his chance;
Or, possibly, Gamaliel might not know,
Much more, not share, the stratagem of Paul.
It would be easy to put him to sleep
And strip him of his raiment, unawares,
For the exchange, unbargained-for, with Paul.
Paul has much travelled everywhere abroad

And freely commerced with all kinds of men.
He has the skill of many magic arts,
The virtue knows of many a mighty drug;
He can compound thee opiate drinks to drown
Thy thought and senses in oblivion.
He could compose thee in so deep a sleep,
Fair like an infant's, that not all the blare
Of all Rome's trumpets loud together blown
Could rouse thee ever from that fixéd sleep.
A dangerous wicked man to wield such power!"

The chiliarch stood suspended in fast gaze
On Shimei, not perusing him, but lost
In various troubled and confounded thought.
'Had he indeed been tricked? Was Paul such knave?
Had that young Hebrew, with his innocent
Bright look of truth and faith and nobleness,
Had he been hollow, false, base, treacherous,
And played upon a Roman father's heart
To rid a rascal out of custody?
Gamaliel — was that reverend-looking man,
That image of a stately-fair old age,
Was he a low complotter of deceit?

Or, if not that, had nameless turpitude
Abused such dignity into a tool,
Helpless, unwitting, of ignoble wile?'
Thought, question, doubt, suspicion, guess, surmise,
Tumbled, a chaos, in the chiliarch's mind.
Shimei paused, watching, with delight intense;
He felt the chiliarch fast ensnared, his prey.

Wary as was his wit, and ill-inclined
Ever to take a needless risk, or dip
His feet in paths wherein, once entered, he
Perforce must fare right forward, no retreat—
Though such in temper, such in habit, yet—
Either that instant suddenly resolved
That his true prudence was temerity,
Or trusting his resourceful craft to pluck
Desperate advantage from the jaws of chance—
Shimei dared interrupt the Roman's muse:
"Will not my lord the chiliarch now think well
To call Gamaliel into presence here?
Well frightened, the old man perhaps might tell
What passed in his long interview with Paul,
Something to help thee judge betwixt us twain,
Which it were well to credit, Paul or me."

The chiliarch started from his reverie;
"Go bring that Hebrew ancient here," he said.
Then neither Jew nor Roman uttered word,
Each busy with his own unsharéd thought,
Till the centurion from his quest returned,
Alone, and serious, no Gamaliel brought.
"I found"—but scarcely the centurion,
Faltering, had so essayed to make report,
When the wroth chiliarch snatched the word from him:
"Was not he there? Did he refuse to come?
The more loth he, the more to be required!
Gray hair will not atone for stubbornness;
Thou shouldst have brought him, though by greater force.
Something lurks here lends color to the tale
This hoar-head Jew has filled my ear withal.
I will Gamaliel see and learn from him—"
"But, sir," spoke up the loth centurion,
"Nothing from that old Hebrew wilt thou learn,
For—" "I will hear no 'fors,'" the chiliarch said,
"But, hark thee, have the man before me straight!"

Mute, the centurion, left no option, turned,

And, with four soldiers bidden follow him,
Went to the lodgment where Gamaliel slept.

Those five men, used to death in many forms,
Yet in the presence of such death were awed.
The four in silence took the sleeper up,
Motionless, with the couch whereon he lay,
And bore him, as to honored burial,
Into the court beneath the starlit sky,
And set him down before the chiliarch.

Like one of those gray monuments in stone,
Oft seen where church or minster of old days,
In secret vault or holy chapel dim,
Gathers and wards its venerated dead—
Marmoreal image of some man, supine,
Deep sunken, in marmoreal down, to sleep,
Safe folded in marmoreal robes from cold,
The meek, pathetic face upturned to heaven,
And thither-pointing hands forever laid
Together on the breast, as thus to pray
For the shriven spirit thence to judgment fled—
So, stretched upon his couch amid the court,
White with his age, yet purer white with death,
An unrebuking, unrebukable

Reminder of the nothingness of time,
Unheeding who beheld or what was spoke,
Silent, and bringing silence touched with awe,
There in marmoreal calm Gamaliel lay.

The simple presence of the living man,
In native majesty august with age,
Would have subdued who saw to reverence;
But the ennoblement and mystery
Of death, now added, wrought a mightier awe,
And almost breathless made the hush wherein
The chiliarch for the moment from the spell
Of Shimei's woven words was quite set free,
Seeing things true by his simplicity.
Breaking that hush, while never once his gaze
Unfixing from the features of the dead,
"Thou shouldst have told me this," said Lysias
To the centurion, gently chiding him.
But the centurion understood aright
That his superior's words were less as blame
Than as atonement meant for fault his own
In that his late too peremptory air—
This the subaltern knew, and answered not.

Shimei, alone not capable of awe,

Coolly had used the interval of pause,
To take the altered situation in,
And to his own advantage fit his part.
Two points of promise to his profit he
Saw, and at once to seize them shaped his course:
First, to release himself from duress there,
And, further, still to sow the chiliarch's mind
With seed of foul suspicion against Paul.
"Gamaliel mute," said he to Lysias,
"Might, peradventure, if but understood,
Even better witness to thy purpose prove
Than should he waken from his swoon to speak."

The sleight of tone with which was uttered
"swoon"—
No emphasis, insinuation all,
Subtle suggestion, naught to be gainsaid,
Since naught was really said, however much
Without the saying got itself conveyed—
This well subserved the wish of Shimei.
For, like a sovereign solvent, that, with soft
Assiduous chemistry insensible,
Some solid to a fluid form breaks down,
There stole from Shimei's speech an influence in,

Which, by degrees not slow, dissolved the charm
Shed from the solemn spectacle of death
Upon the chiliarch's mind; his childlike mood
Vanished, his simple wise credulity!
Lysias reverted to his cynicism,
And, unawares lured on by Shimei,
Followed false lights to a conclusion vain.
Once more he overweened to be astute,
And, with astuteness recommencing, fell
From the brief wisdom reverence brief had brought.
His faith in human virtue undermined,
He doubted and believed exactly wrong;
There where he ought to have believed, he doubted,
And where he should have doubted, there believed —
The captor fallen into the captive's snare.
Lysias resumed to do what Shimei wished;
The tissue of sophistication set
Already well aweaving in the loom
Of fancy and false reason and unfaith,
Which had before been humming in his brain —
This to piece out, and make a finished web.

"'Swoon,' sayest thou?" To Shimei, Lysias thus;
"That is not death, thou thinkest, but a swoon?"

"It looks indeed like death," the crafty Jew
Responded; "yea, it looks like death indeed.
It was not meant, but death it sure must be."

"What wilt thou say?" said Lysias. "'Was not
meant!'—
Thy words conceal thy meaning; speak it out."

"Why, sir, I have no meaning to conceal,"
The Jew replied, "no meaning to conceal.
I only thought, I could but only think—
Why, see, Paul was Gamaliel's pupil once,
And loved his master, so as such can love;
At least I thought so. Paul, for sure I know,
Gamaliel like a doting father loved."

"Thou dost not thus explain, 'It was not meant';
Out with thy thought, sir Jew," the chiliarch said.
"What was not meant? By whom not meant?
Forsooth,
Not by Gamaliel meant that he should die?
Except the suicide, none means to die;
And death like this is not the suicide's."

"Oh, nay, sir," Shimei said, "no suicide
Was our Gamaliel; far the heinous thought!

A good old man, whom all the people loved,
Paul even, yea, Paul — I thought — till now — but
now —
But I will not believe so base of him,
Even him; he did not mean it, did not mean
Worse than to make Gamaliel deeply sleep.
Paul's drug belike was stronger than he thought,
Or weaker waxed Gamaliel with his age.
Paul would himself repent it, now, too late —
Particularly since of no avail,
Thy wise forestalling plan defeating his,
And fruit none from it ripening to his hand!"

"This is too foully base!" said Lysias,
And Shimei's heart misgave him with a fear.
'Too foully base insinuation mine,
Does Lysias mean?' he closely asked himself;
But calmly, with deep candor, said aloud:
"Yea, even for Paul, beyond belief too base!
Paul never meant it, I shall still insist.
He meant at most such sleep as should prevail
Over Gamaliel's scruple to take part
Willingly in his surreptitious flight.
And such a master of his arts is Paul,

I shrewdly doubt if here his mark he missed.
Were Paul but now at hand to try his skill,
I should not wonder yet to see this swoon
Yield to some potent drug of counter force,
And good Gamaliel wake to life again.
Once, as they say — in Troas, I believe —
Where he all night was lengthening out harangue,
After his manner, in an upper room,
A youngster, tired to death of hearing him,
And sensible enough to go to sleep,
Not sensible enough to seat him safe,
Fell headlong out of window, whence he sat,
A good three stories' fall — which finished him.
Stay, not so fast — thou reckonest without Paul!
Yea, Paul performed some sort of magic rite
Over the body of the luckless lad,
Which, presto, brought him round as brisk as ever!
A mighty master in his kind, that Paul!"

"Perish thy Paul with his accurséd craft!"
Burst out the chiliarch in indignant heat.
"Would I but had him back here safe in thrall! —
I should have let them rend him limb from limb!"

A sudden hope beyond the bounds of hope

Flourished up rank, gourd-like, in Shimei's breast.
Were it but possible to have Paul back,
To take that walk yet to the judgment-hall!
The forty faithful should not fail their task!

"Might I propose if it be yet too late?"
With timid daring, Shimei inquired.
"A fleet-foot horse should overtake the troop,
If so thou choose, and turn them hither back.
And thou couldst cause that Paul exert his power
To lift this corpse into a living man —
Which were a famous spectacle to see!
Besides that then thou mightst assure thyself,
Through counsel of our Sanhedrim, what crimes
Worthy of death are proved upon this Paul."

"Thou art a superserviceable Jew,"
The chiliarch frowned and said. A choleric man,
He choleric now, through self-expression, grew.
Exasperate thus, he added: "'Ruler' thou
Of thine accurséd nation — as I hear —
Me too thou fain wouldst rule, with thy advice
Officiously advanced unsought. Know, then,
That I confound thee with thy race, and curse
Ye all together, pestilent brood — not less

Thee than thy fellows, whom thou rulest, forsooth,
Worthy to rule those worthily so ruled!
Like ruler to like people, vipers all!
If I believe thee of thy brother Paul,
It is no wise that I suppose thee true
Rather than him; but only that I reckon
One rascal feels another by mere kin,
And can, and, if so be he hates him, will,
Into his own soul look and paint him *that*—
Making a likeness apt to two at once!
Nay, nay, thou wretched, reptile Jew, all thanks!
I would not have Paul back upon my hands.
I am well rid of *him*, and now hence thou!
Go tell thy fellow-elders of the Jews
That here Gamaliel lies, dead or aswoon,
And bid them haste to bear him hence away.
Go, not one further word from thy foul mouth,
Lest whole thou never go!"

Red with his wrath,
Abruptly on his heel turned the wroth man
And disappeared within. The Jew so spurned—
Though disappointed, imperturbable—
With wry grimace hugging himself, made speed

To use the freedom thus in overplus
Thrust on him, and incontinently went.
Scarce was he well without the castle gate,
When a brusque message from the chiliarch
Summoned him back. He came, with supple knee
Cringing his thanks and deprecations dumb.
"So act thy abject language, if thou will,
But no word speak, edging thine ear to hear,"
The chiliarch, from his heat of passion passed
To a grim mood of resolution, said;
"I will that — no delay — thou hither bring
Large satisfaction from thy countrymen —
Just measure of their estimate of thee! —
That thou wilt duly bide within command
The suddenest from this castle, and appear,
Whenever I may call for thee, to go
Whithersoever I shall bid thee hence,
Whether to Cæsarea or to Rome,
Whether now presently or hereafter long,
Accuser meet and witness against Paul.
Count it that thou thus much at least hast gained,
Through thy this night's adventure, chance, to wit,
Assuréd chance, thy famished grudge to glut
Upon thy brother rogue and countryman —

Be he, that is, the wretch thou paintest him,
And, mark it well, be thou his overmatch
In lying eloquence to make appear
Likeliest whatever best thy turn shall serve.
Perhaps twin rascals, of each other worthy,
Will, both at once, and each the other, prove
Just to be what they are, and earn their doom!"
"Send with this worthy," thus the chiliarch,
To his centurion turning, said, "some man
Who knows, if nothing more, thus much at least,
How to be adder-deaf and death-like dumb—
To dog him hence about and hither back!"
"I wish thee pleasure of thy evening walk!"
To Shimei, in mock courtesy, he said.

With pleasantry as bitter as his own
The mocker found himself a second time,
And now to discomposure worse, dismissed.
Of his own will he gladly would have gone
From east to west as wide as was the world,
To weave the meshes of his witness false
About Paul's feet, or still to ambush him
With instant bloody death at unawares;
But thus to go, a lasso round his neck

Held in the hand of Rome — it irked him sore.
His heart misgave him heavily; he felt:
'And here perhaps is destiny for me,
Perhaps, who knows? at last, at last, for me!
On mine own head do I Paul's house pull down?'

Strange, but, born with the boding sense thus born
Of unguessed danger for himself, there crept
Into that case-hard heart, long exercised
To plot of mischief for his fellow-man,
A softness, that was nigh become remorse,
A kind of pity from self-pity sprung,
Toward whoso was endangered, yea, even Paul!
It was the slow beginning of an end —
Slow, liable to be quenched like smoking flax,
Yet not so quenched to be — with Shimei.
Meanwhile, from this to that there stretched much road,
And Shimei still had demon's work to do.

BOOK IV.

BY NIGHT FOR CÆSAREA.

The narrative returns to Paul riding with young Stephen, under escort of Roman soldiers, toward Cæsarea. The uncle and nephew (at sufficient remove from the cavalry before them and the infantry behind them) after an interval of silence, engage in conversation on a subject suggested by young Stephen's quoting against Shimei one of the imprecatory psalms. This conversation is prolonged till Antipatris is reached, from which point young Stephen comes back to Jerusalem with the returning foot-soldiers, while Paul goes on with the horse to Cæsarea.

BY NIGHT FOR CÆSAREA.

Clanging their armor and their arms alight
In doubtful glimmer from the torches blown,
Forward into the silence and the dark,
Through the strait street, out from the city gate,
Along the ringing highway stretched in stone
To Cæsarea from Jerusalem,
Rode vanguard in that order of array
The turm of horse — in count three score and ten,
But many fold to seeming multiplied
Under the shadowy light that showed them half,
Half hid them, and amid the numerous noise
And movement of their massive martial tread.
The centuries of foot the rear composed,
While midst, between the horse and infantry,
And double-guarded so from every fear —
Before, behind, commodious interval —
Those Hebrew kinsmen, Paul and Stephen, rode.

A league now measured under the still heaven —
Quiet, they twain, as the beholding stars —
And Stephen heard the silence at his side

Softly become the sound of a low voice.
As when the ground parts and a buried seed —
Quickened already in that genial womb,
But viewless — steals from darkness into light,
So, with such unperceived transition, now,
Melodious meditation in Paul's heart
Grew out of secret silence into song.
Stephen, who, from his very cradle taught,
The holy lore of Scripture had by heart,
Knew the subdued preamble that he heard
For echo from the music of a psalm.
'Mine uncle of Gamaliel muses!' he
Felt from the moment that thus Paul began:
"Yea, so He giveth His belovéd sleep!
Blesséd be God, who such a gift gave him!
Blesséd be God, who yet such gift from me
Withholds, gift longed for, but awaited still
With patience — till His pleasure to bestow!
Blesséd be God! He doeth all things well!
It may be I shall wake until He come!
But if I sleep, I still shall sleep in Him,
For so He giveth His belovéd sleep!
Sweet gift, and sure the way of giving sweet,
Since it will be in Him, in Him, in Him —

However long hence, and however harsh,
The lullaby may be that brings the sleep,
At last, at last, the sleep will be in Him!
To wake to Jesus, or in Him to sleep,
Whichever lot for me He choose, I choose.
His choice I do not know, but He knows mine;
My will, he knows, is His, for Him in me
To choose with, or His will is mine, for me
In Him to choose with, now and evermore."
"Amen!" Paul murmured, with such voice as if
The prayer he uttered turned to sacrament.

Stephen a little lingered, and then said:
"Thou and thy voice, O honored kinsman mine,
Commend to me whatever thou mayst say
Or sing; that inner-sounding melody,
Most sweet, which never other makes save thee,
But oft thou makest as to thyself alone
When thou alone art, or, as now, with whom
Thou lovest, and so trustest, utterly,
It seems — this I have heard my mother say,
Who loves it, as I love it, taught by her —
It seems to pass the hearing sense unheard;
The deeper, if I hear it not, I feel;

My heart feeds on it with her inner ear.
Yet, and however so commended, yet
Thy choice awakens no desire in me.
Sleep, to thy nephew, uncle, seems not sweet,
Or less sweet seems than waking is to him.
To lie, like reverend dear Gamaliel there,
Still, stirless still ; cold, marble cold ; deaf, dumb ;
Calm, yea, too calm, for ever, ever calm ;
No pain, no fret, but joy, but pleasure none ;
Nor action, nor endeavor, nor attempt,
Nor strife, nor aspiration, nor desire ;
No glorious exultation in emprise,
Or rally of reaction from defeat ;
Fear none indeed, but never, never hope ;
No change, no chance of any change, the same,
The same, continuance without end prolonged ;
Of life — nothing, but only dull, dull death
And apathy — O uncle, such a state,
And though thou call it sleep in Jesus, yet —
Shall I confess it, uncle, to my shame? —
It has no charm for me, I wish to live ;
I love life, motion, and the sense of power.
Hebrew I am, in spirit as in blood,
Yet Greek withal enough, if Greek it be,

To dread the drear, dark, sunless underworld,
Hades or Sheol, and to choose instead
This cheerful upper air and joyousness,
The brightness of this sun-enlightened earth.
And I should like to see what I with life
Can do; something, I trust, besides to live,
Some worthy, noble, arduous end to serve,
To wrestle with the world and overthrow!"

Paul thought within himself: 'Along this road,
This very road, some score of years ago,
Saul, in the early dawn of that spring day,
Rode for Damascus from Jerusalem,
Nursing such thoughts — fair thoughts they seemed
to him!
And I was then nigh double my Stephen's age —
Ah, and not half his bright young innocence!'

"It is thy youth," to Stephen Paul replied,
"Thy youth and health, the fountain fresh of life
Unwasted, springing up for flow in thee;
Life is the secret of the love of life.
My song of sleep I did not sing for thee,
But for a weary older man than thou,
Who has already lived, already seen

What he could do with life! Weary am I —
With living weary, though of living not —
And, God so willing, I should gladly rest."

The sweetness of the pensiveness of this,
From such an one as Paul the aged, smote
On Stephen with a stroke as of reproof —
Unmeant, to him the less resistible —
And touched to recollection and remorse.
He said: "O uncle, be my fault forgiven,
That I so lightly thought but of myself!
This ride to thee is added weariness,
Which to me were exhilaration pure,
Could I forget again, as I cannot,
The need my uncle has of rest instead.
I slept, while thou wert waking, through that long
Farewell talk with thy friend, and I am fresh
From slumber, as thou art with waking worn —
Besides that I am young and thou art old."

"Nay, thou wert right, my lad," said Paul to him;
"'Rejoice thou,' so that ancient preacher cried,
And so cries God Himself within the blood,
'Rejoice thou, O young man, in thy fair youth,
And let thy heart in thy young days cheer thee.'

I were myself the egotist thou blamest,
Were I to hang my heavy age on thee
And with it weigh thy blithesome spirits down ;
Besides that I should suffer loss deserved,
Who, in the midmost of my spirit, spring
With answering pulse to pulse of youth from thee.
Go on, my Stephen, for Paul's sake be glad,
Thou canst not be more glad than gladdens me.
Now glad we both are surely in one thing,
That thou hast saved thine uncle from that death.
Let us together sing a gladsome psalm."

Then softly they in unison began,
Softly, with yet their accent jubilant:
"'Had it not been Jehovah on our side,
'Let Israel now'—let us as Israel—'say,
'Had it not been Jehovah on our side,
'When men, together sworn, against us rose,
'Then had they truly swallowed us alive,
'When sore their wrath against us kindled was;
'The waters then had overwhelmed us quite,
'Over our soul the rushing stream had gone,
'Over our soul the proud exulting waters.
'Forever blesséd be Jehovah Lord,

'Who did not give us to their teeth a prey!
'Escaped our soul is, like unto a bird
'That is escaped from out the fowler's snare;
'The snare is broken, and escaped are we.
'Our help is in the Lord Jehovah's name,
'In His name is, who fashioned heaven and earth.'"

They ceased, but presently Paul's voice alone:
"How those great words, which God the Holy Ghost
Spake by the mouth of men of old, elect
To be His earthly oracles — how they
Fill yet the mouth of him that utters them,
And fill the ear of him that hears them uttered,
And the heart fill of him that makes them his —
Fill, and, enlarging ever, ever fill!
They satisfy the soul, not as with food
That sates the hunger, to cry out, 'Enough!'
But as with hunger's self, and appetite
That never ceases crying, 'More! And more!'
Forever greater growing, and sweeter far
Than could be any stay to such desire!
According as the Lord Himself once spake
Pronouncing blesséd those whose hunger is

For righteousness, and promising to them
Fulness. Fulness without satiety
Their blesséd state! State blesséd, sure — to be
If only with that heavenly hunger filled!"

To Stephen half, but half in ecstasy
Of pure abandonment to worshiping
High passion and communion rapt above,
Paul so his heart disburdened of its praise.

"Yea," Stephen said, "it is a noble psalm,
Triumphal in its gladness at escape
Like thine from evil and from evil men.
With all my heart I sang it thankfully —
At least, if joyfully be thankfully;
Yet have *I* thoughts not uttered through that psalm."

The elder and the wiser well divined,
From something in the manner of the speech
Of Stephen, as too from the words themselves
He spoke, what was the spirit of those thoughts
Within him, which the chanted psalm left dumb.
Paul safer judged it for his nephew's health
Of heart and conscience, that the heat and stir
Of natural thought untoward in him find
Issue in utterance, than sealed shut to be.

"And what, then, nephew, were those thoughts of
thine?"
In gentle serious question he inquired.

"How is it, uncle," swerving, asked the youth—
For a fine tact to feel what other felt,
Unspoken, unbetokened, though it were,
Was Stephen's, and this power of sympathy
Now gave him sobering sense of check from Paul—
"How is it, so thou deemest me meet to know,
I never hear thee speak of Shimei?"

"Ah, Stephen," Paul replied, "we lack not themes
To speak of, promising more food to thee
For sweet and gracious thought and feeling. Yet
I think of Shimei, and to God I speak
Of him in prayer, often, not without hope.
I never will abandon him to be
Himself, the self that now is he. Too well,
Too bitterly, I remember what I was,
I myself, once, as rancorous as he!
If guileful less, that was the grace of God,
Who made us differ from each other there.
Hateful to him I needs was, from the first,
But I was hateful more than needed be;

I helped him hate me by my scornful pride.
Would from his hate I could that strand untwine!
Hating Paul less, he less might Jesus hate;
Only to pity Shimei am I clear."

"Thy patience and thy meekness make me fierce
With anger, with ungovernable wrath
Most righteous," Stephen cried, "against those men
Who, hating, hunt mine uncle to the death!
I hate them, and I wish them — what themselves
Wish thee; dogs of the devil that they are!
I know a psalm that I should like to sing —
But I should need to roughen hoarse my voice,
And a tune frame well jangled out of tune,
To sing it as I would, and as were meet.
Thy pardon, but my rage surpasses bound;
To think of what thou art and what they are!
Some spirit in me, right or wrong, too hot
For any counsel, even thine own, to cool,
Forces unto my lips those wholesome words
Of hearty human hatred, God-inspired,
Most needful vent and ease to wish like mine;
I lift to God the prayer Himself inbreathed:
'Hold not thy peace, thou Lord God of my praise!

'Who hath rewarded evil still for good,
'And hatred still for only love returned,
'Set thou a wicked one lord over him,
'And Satan ever keep at his right hand.
'When he is judged, then let him guilty prove,
'And let his very prayer turn into sin.
'Few let his days be, and his office let
'Another take. His children fatherless,
'His wife a widow, be. Nay, vagabonds
'His children, let them beg from door to door.
'All that he hath, let the extortioner
'Catch, and let strangers make his labor spoil.
'Let his posterity be utterly
'Cut off, and in the time to come their name
'Be blotted out. Let the iniquity
'Of his forefathers still remembered be
'In the Lord's presence, and his mother's sin
'Not blotted out: because he persecuted
'The poor and needy man, and those that were
'Already broken-hearted sought to slay.
'Cursing he loved, and cursing came to him;
'In blessing he delighted not, and far
'From him was blessing. He with cursing
clothed

'Himself as with his garment, and it sank
'Soaking into his inward parts like water
'And penetrating to his bones like oil.
'Amen! Let cursing be forevermore
'As if the raiment wherewith he himself
'Covers, and for the girdle of his loins
'About them belted fast forevermore!'"

Stephen felt blindly that the eager ire
With which he entered, flaming, on that strain
Of awful imprecation from the psalm,
Faltered within his heart as he went on —
Insensibly but insupportably
Dispirited toward sinking by the lack
Of buoying and sustaining sympathy
Supplied it from without; as if the lark,
Upspringing, on exultant pinion borne,
Should, midway in his soaring for the sun,
Meet a great gulf of space wherein the air
Was spun out thinner than could bear his weight.
He ended, halting; and there followed pause,
Which ponderable seemed to Stephen, so
Did his heart feel the pressure of that pause.
At length Paul said, with sweetest irony,

That almost earnest seemed, it was so sweet:
"Yea, nephew, hast thou, then, already grown
Perfect in love, that thou darest hate like that?"

It was not asked for answer, Stephen knew,
And answer had he none he could have given,
No answer, save of silence, much-ashamed.
Paul let the searching of himself, begun
And busy in the spirit of the youth,
Go on in silence for a while; and then
In gravest sweet sincerity he spoke:
"Hating is sweet and wholesome, for the heart
That can hate purely, out of utter love.
But who for these things is sufficient — save
God only? God is love, and He can hate.
But for me, Stephen, mine own proper self,
I dare not hate until I better love.
When, as I hope, hereafter I shall be
Perfect in love, then I may safely hate;
Till then, I task myself to love alone."

There was such reverence in Paul's gravity,
Reverence implied toward him as toward a peer,
Not peer in age, but peer in human worth —
Toward him, so young, so heady, and so fond —

That Stephen, in the sting of the rebuke
Itself, shaming him, though so gracious, felt
A tonic touch that made him more a man.
Uplifted, while abashed, he dared to say:
"Perhaps I trespassed in my vehemence;
But, uncle, did not God inspire the psalm?"

"Doubtless, my Stephen," Paul replied; "but not,
Not therefore, thee inspire to use the psalm.
Sound thine own heart now, nephew, and tell me,
Which was it in thy heart that prayed the prayer—
True vehemence in sympathy with God,
Or vehemence against thy brother man?
A sentiment of sympathy with me
Thou canst not say, for I have no such wish
As that thou breathedst, touching any man."

"Though not in sympathy with thee, at least
For thy sake," Stephen said, "mine anger burned."

"For my sake, yea, but not acceptably
Even so," said Paul; "since neither did it serve
My cause, nor please me, if I speak the truth.
I know thy love for me and hold it dear;
All the world's gold were no exchange for it.

So, doubt not, Stephen, that to what degree
Love for thine uncle prompted that thy prayer,
Thine uncle thanks thee for it from his heart.
But let us, thou and I together both,
To our own selves severely faithful be.
Shall we not say that that love faulty is,
Which less desires to please the one beloved,
Than to indulge itself, have its own way?
And knowest thou not it would have pleased me
better —
Since, for the present, question is of me —
To see my nephew altogether such
As I myself am, lover of all men,
Hater of none, not even mine enemy?
Thou didst not love me well enough for that!

"Thy love though precious and though well-refined
Had yet alloy in it of selfishness —
Of specious, almost lovely, selfishness,
I grant thee; yea, according to the world,
That loves its own illusions, lovely quite —
Of such a selfishness alloy enough
To take its counsel of itself, not me,
Blindly abandoned to its own excess."

"The art of love thou makest difficult!"
Stephen, with chastened deprecation, said.

"Not 'difficult,' impossible," said Paul,
"Save to whom Jesus makes it possible.
I wish that I could bring thee to perceive
How, severed from Him, thou canst not love at all,
Right love, I mean, the one safe sense of love,
Love with the gift of immortality,
Since pure and perfectly-proportioned love!
Left to ourselves, we love capriciously;
Ever some form of fond self-love it is,
Which in disguise of love to other masks.
If thou in Jesus truly hadst loved me
Then hadst thou loved me as I would be loved,
To absolute effacement of thyself
Through whole replacement of thyself with me.
Enormous claim seems this of selfishness
In me? But I describe ideally
The love that I myself to Jesus bear.
In Him I lose, and find again, my self,
And the new self I find again, is — He!
It is but as united thus with Him —
My wish, my will, become the same as His —

That I dare make exaction for myself
Of love that seems to blot another out,
Or merge him in a new and different self.
I ask thee — not my will, but Christ's, made thine —
To love me with the love that pleases Him."

"All this," said Stephen, "must be true, I feel —
I feel it better than I understand."

"I also," Paul said, "in this mystery
Am wiser with my heart than with my mind,
I feel it better than I understand;
Although I understand it better too
Than I can make it plain in any words."

Whereon in silence for a space they rode,
While their thoughts ranged diverse in worlds apart.

Then Stephen: "That distempering heat in me,
O uncle, is clean gone from out mine heart,
Slaked by the overshadowing of thy spirit,
Like the earth cooled with overshadowing night.
I am calm enough, I think, to learn, if not
Thy difficult high doctrine touching love,
Something at least about those psalms of hate.

Hate is the spirit of the psalm I said,
Is it not, uncle?"

"As thou saidst it, yea,
Or I mistook the meaning of thy voice,"
Said Paul; "whatever meant the holy words,
The tones, I felt, meant that and nothing else."

"Could then those words themselves mean something else?"
Asked Stephen.

"Yea," said Paul, "for words are naught
But empty vessels that the utterer fills
With his own spirit when he utters them;
The spirit is the lord of utterance."

"What was the spirit with which the Spirit of God
Breathed these into the soul of him elect
Among the sons of men to give them voice?
Did not God hate whom He so heavily cursed?"
Stephen inquired; and Paul at large replied:
"God hates not any, as wicked men count hate—
And men not wicked may, in wicked mood—
Nor wills that of the souls whom He has made
Any should perish; rather wills that all

Come to the knowledge of the truth and live.
But look abroad upon the world of men;
What seest thou? Many souls resist the will,
The blesséd will to save, of God. Of these,
Some will hereafter yield — thou knowest not who,
But some — and let themselves be saved. Again,
Some will to the end resist — thou knowest not who,
But some — and obstinately choose to die;
Choice is the fearful privilege of all.
Now, toward the man incorrigibly bad,
Who evil loves and evil makes his good
Forever, without hope of other change
Than change from worse to worse forevermore —
Toward such a man, what must the aspect be
Of the Supreme Eternal Holiness?
What but of wrath, or as of wrath, and hate?
Canst thou imagine other face of God
Than frown and threat aflame implacable
Against implacable rebellion set,
And sin eternal, to eternal sin
Doomed, for self-doomed through free unchanging choice?
One flame burns love toward love, and hate toward hate —

Toward hate that utmost love cannot subdue,
The hate that, like the stubborn diamond-stone
Amid the fiercest fires rebellious, bides
Still, in love's sevenfold-heated furnace, hate.
That flame is the white flame of holiness —
Which God is, and whose other name is love."

"God is a dreadful thought," said Stephen.
"Yea,"
Said Paul; "such Jacob felt it when he cried,
'How dreadful is this place!' and Bethel named
The place where God was and he knew it not.
God is a dreadful thought, dreadful as sweet —
The sweetness and the dreadfulness are one.
But never was the dreadfulness so sweet,
The sweetness never yet so dreadful shown,
As then when Jesus died on Calvary!
Shroud thyself, Stephen, from the dreadfulness,
Felt to be too intolerably bright,
In the cool, shadowing, sheltering thought, so nigh,
Of mercy, mercy, still in judgment sheathed."

"I feel the buoyance of my spirit sink,
Oppressed by the great weight of these thy thoughts,"

Said Stephen; "and my heart is very still.
I wait to hear what God the Lord will speak."

"Hearken," said Paul. "Those fearful words of curse
Which late thou nigh hadst turned to blasphemy,
Daring to lade them with thy personal spite
Against a neighbor man, whom we must love,
Until we know hereafter, which God fend!
That he bides reprobate, self-reprobate —
Those maledictions dire, through David breathed,
Express not human hate, but hate divine,
Revealed in forms of human speech, and, too,
Inspired in whoso can the height attain
To side with God, and passionlessly damn,
As if with highest passion, any found —
Whom, known not yet, even to himself not known,
Much less to thee or me, but known to God,
And to be known, in that great day, to all —
Fixed in his final choice of evil for good.
Henceforward, Stephen, when thou sayest that psalm,
Say it and tremble, lest thyself be he,
The man thou cursest in its awful curse!"

"If it were right," said Stephen, after pause
Prolonged in solemn chiding of himself,
"If it were right and seemly, things profane
To mingle with things sacred so — I think
Perforce now of a certain tragedy
I read once by that Grecian Sophocles,
Wherein a Theban king, one Œdipus,
Denounces on a murderer frightful doom,
Dreaming not he — though every reader knows —
The murderer he so curses is himself.
I shudder when I think, 'Were it to be
That the fierce blasting I invoked to fall
Upon another's head, I drew on mine:
"Cursing he loved, and cursing fell on him!"'
Forefend it God, and Christ with blessing fill
This heart of mine, too hasting prone to hate!"
"Amen!" said Paul, "thou prayest for me and
thee!"

Out of the depths of the long hush that then
Followed between those midnight travellers,
Emerging, like a diver of the sea
That brings up dripping pearl from sunken cave
And, gladdened, lifts it flashing to the sun,

So, to his young companion speaking, Paul —
Not turning while he spoke his countenance
Toward him, but fixed right forward keeping it,
Intent, as on an object not of sight,
Before him held with unmaterial hand,
An unmaterial treasure passing price,
Imagined fair by the creating soul —
Said, with such cheerful rally in the voice
As one invites with, some delight to share:
"Wilt thou hear, Stephen? I have been revolving
In form a kind of hymn concerning love,
Which, in a letter, some twelve months ago,
I wrote the church in Corinth. There was need,
For they were sore at strife among themselves,
Vying with one another to outdo
In divers showy gifts miraculous,
Or outward deeds that daze the eyes of men:
Tongues, prophecies, the keys of mysteries,
High knowledges, sublime degrees of faith,
Almsgivings to impoverishment, stout heart
To brave devouring flames in testimony —
All these things, but for lowly love small care!

"My soul was worn and anxious with my pain

At such distractions of the church of Christ;
I found my peace at last in this thought, 'How
Love would heal all, would gently join from schism,
And in one bind the body of the Lord!'
A wish ineffable seized me to make
Love lovely to those loveless ones. I had,
With the wish born, and of the wish perhaps,
A sudden vision that entranced me quite.
I saw love take a body beautiful
And live and act in most angelic wise;
It was as if a heavenly spectacle
Let down before me by a heavenly hand—
Not to be viewed with unanointed eyes;
I touched my eyes with eyesalve and beheld.
Then a Voice said, 'What thou beholdest, write.'
I took my pen and sought to catch the grace
Of being and behavior shown to me,
And fix it, as I could, in form and phrase,
For those Corinthians and all men to see.
A living picture, and a hymn, there grew.

"Hymn I may call my eulogy of love,
Then written, for indeed it seemed to sing
Within me, as I mused it, and the tune

Still to the hearing of my heart is sweet.
I felt, and feel, a kind of awe of it,
Myself that made it, for I did not make
It wholly, I myself, I know quite well;
A breath divine, breathed in me, purified
My will to will it, and my soul to sing.

"My Stephen will not think it strange that thus
Our talking of an hour ago on hate
Set me to dreaming counterwise of love.
I build of love a refuge for myself,
Whither to run for rest and sanctuary
From thoughts of hatred thirsting for my soul.
Love is my house, and there the air is love —
My shelter round about, the breath I draw.
No castle is there like my house of love,
Charmed not to let footstep of evil in;
And what will quench the Wicked's fiery darts
Like love drawn round one for an atmosphere?
Himself gasps breathless with but love to breathe;
Yea, I am safe from him if I can love.
And love I can, through Christ who strengthens me,
Whatever natural force I feel to hate.
I love to love, it is my chief delight;

I triumph by it over all my foes.
The harder these my triumph make to win,
The more, since I must win it still by love,
To love they drive me, and increase my joy.
My triumph is my love, and my love's joy.
But thou my poem hear in praise of love :
'With men's tongues speaking, and with angels', yet,
'Love lacking, I am sounding brass become,
'Or clanging cymbal. Prophecy though mine,
'And mysteries all to grasp, and knowledge all,
'And mine though be all faith so as to move
'Mountains, I yet, love lacking, nothing am.
'And though I lavish all I own in alms,
'And though I yield my body to be burned,
'Yet I, love lacking, am naught profited.

'Love suffers long, is kind, love envies not,
'Love does not vaunt herself, is not puffed up,
'Deports herself in no unseemly wise,
'Seeks not her own, is not provoked, imputes
'Not evil, at unrighteousness no joy
'Feels, but her joy has with the truth, bears up
'Against all things, all things believes, all things

'Hopes, undergoes all things. Love never fails;
'But whether there be prophecies, they will
'Be done away, tongues whether, they will cease,
'Whether there knowledge be, it will have end.
'For we in part know, and we prophesy
'In part; but when that which is perfect comes,
'Then that which is in part will pass away.
'When I a child was, as a child I talked,
'I did my thinking as a child, I used
'My reason as a child; since I a man
'Have grown, the child's part I have put aside.
'For now we darkly, through reflection, see,
'But face to face then. Now I know in part,
'But then shall I know fully, even as I
'Also am fully known. And now these three
'Bide, faith, hope, love; but of these chief is love.'

"Stephen, how little Shimei guesses," Paul
Said, having thus his hymn of love rehearsed,
"The secret triumph ever over him
I celebrate, in loving him, despite
His hating me, and seeking to destroy!
Who knows but God to love will win him yet?"

A certain gentle humor exquisite
Enlivened and commended this from Paul.
But Stephen answered not; indignant love
Swelled in his heart, and choked within his throat
The way of words, and dimmed his eyes with tears.

Thus at Antipatris arrived, they halt:
Here Stephen, nursing other purpose not
Disclosed, disclosed to Paul a wish he had
To go back with the infantry returning,
And reassure his mother that all was well.
Paul sped his nephew with his benison;
And, after rest had, and refreshment meet,
Himself thence, with the escort cavalry
Safeguarded, on to Cæsarea rode,
Not lonely, though alone, and prisoner.

BOOK V.

SHIMEI AND YOUNG STEPHEN.

Stephen, having returned, goes at once to the chiliarch, his secret purpose being to convict Shimei of his crime, through certain evidence which he thinks he can bring to bear on the case. To the youth's disappointment and chagrin, he is received coldly and repellently by the chiliarch now much out of humor as a sequel to his disagreeable interview with Shimei. Dismissed crestfallen to go, Stephen is suddenly confronted at the door by Shimei, at that moment arriving in obedience to a summons from the chiliarch. The mutual encounter has the effect on the chiliarch observing it, to change his attitude toward Stephen, making it favorable again. Shimei is sent to Cæsarea under suspicion; where Felix, the governor, plans a hearing for the prisoner Paul.

SHIMEI AND YOUNG STEPHEN.

At Cæsarea soon the Sanhedrim,
By deputy and advocate, appeared
Before the bar of Felix governor,
To implead the prisoner Paul.

The high-priest brought
The weight and dignity of rulership
Supreme among his people, to impress
On Felix fitting sense of the grave cause
Now come before him to be judged. Thin veiled
Beneath the decent fair exterior show
Of only public and judicial aim
And motive in that ruler of the Jews
(The high-priest Ananias), deep there wrought
A leaven of personal vindictiveness
Twofold, sullen resentment of affront,
And, added, that least placable, that worst
Hatred, the hatred toward a brother wronged.
Whom he, from his own judgment-seat — profaned
Thus by his profanation of the law —
Had wantonly commanded to be smitten

Upon the mouth, this outraged man must now
Be proved, forsooth, a wretch unmeet to live.

But Shimei, as prime mover, was left, too,
To be prime manager, of all. Far less
Festive, than his old wont, in exercise
Of that exhaustless wit his own in wile,
Serious he now, yea even to sadness, seemed.

And reason was. For Claudius Lysias
Had summoned him to presence in the fort;
And there, hap not to have been imagined, he,
Besides the haughty Roman chief, had met
Another face more welcome scarce than his.

Young Stephen's purpose, not revealed, had been
To move some action against Shimei.
This gentle Hebrew youth inherited
Large measure of the wilful spirit high
That in the blood of all his kindred ran.
Of his own motion he, without advice,
Nay, headstrong, in the teeth of thwart advice,
Which, though he sought it not, he full well felt
In current counter to his wish — self-moved
Thus, and self-willed, Paul's nephew had resolved

To try what might to him be possible—
By putting in the place of the accused
Instead of the accuser's, that base man,
His uncle's foe—to free his uncle's state,
Once and for all, from danger and annoy
Due to the restless hate of Shimei.
The friendly chiliarch was his first resort.

In one swift glance, which more was of the mind
Itself, perceiving as it were without
Organ, than of the eye with which it saw,
Stephen that night, upon the point of time
When Shimei was arrested and brought in,
A glimpse had caught of two receding forms
Of men upon the street, flying as seemed;
Whom instantly he knew to be the same
With that pair of conspirators to slay,
Whose whispers had revealed their plot to him:
These were the stout young fellows Shimei set
To lie in wait for the escaping Paul.
The moment they beheld their master seized,
They quickly had betaken them to flight;
But Stephen's mind flew faster than their feet,
And with intangible tether had them bound.

This his new observation of the twain
Made him secure of recognizing them
Whenever or wherever seen again.
With so much clue as this, no more, in hand,
To guide him in the quest of testimony
That might his crimes bring home to Shimei —
Supposed still safe in keeping at the fort —
Stephen his audience with the chiliarch sought.

The bright hope that he brought in coming, sprung
From grateful recollection of the grace
He found, that morning, in the Roman's eyes,
Was promptly damped to deep dejection now.
The chiliarch met him with a cold and sour
Severity of aspect that repelled,
Beyond the youth's capacity — unbuoyed,
For this occasion, with approving sense
Of well-advised attempt at least, if vain —
To front it with unruffled brow. Abashed
He stood, confused; the blood rushed to his face;
His tongue clung to his mouth's roof; and in all
He less looked like that youthful innocence
Which won the Roman so in his soft mood,
Than like the conscious guilt, uncovered now,

In Shimei's slant insinuation shown.
The chiliarch by reaction was relapsed
Into his sternest temper of disdain
Embittered by suspicious cynicism;
Apt sequel of the interview prolonged
With Shimei, and the final passionate
Ejection of that Hebrew from the fort.
He now awaiting Shimei, summoned back
Once more, to be to Cæsarea sent,
Here was that Stephen — despicable he
Too, doubtless, like his despicable race!
Such was the prompt involuntary set,
Inhospitable, of the chiliarch's thought,
For welcome of the youth before him there.

To Stephen's stammering words about those men,
And how they might be made to testify
Of Shimei's desperate plot to murder Paul,
Thus bringing Shimei to deservéd doom,
The Roman tartly said: "Aye, aye, young sir,
I think it like, seems altogether like.
You Jews could, all of you, I doubt not, swear
Of one another, brethren as ye be,
Things damnable enough to crucify

Ye all, and, what is more, for just that once,
Swear true! But thanks, lad, I have had my fill
At present of these proffered services."

The manner was dismissory, more even
Than were the words, and Stephen bowed to go.
But his own manner in thus bowing changed,
Although he spoke not, to such dignity,
Recovered from his discomposure late,
So instantly recovered, and so pure—
Adulterate in no trace with hardihood—
A dignity comportable with youth,
While eloquent of virtue and high mind,
And, like a robe, so beautifully worn
Over a person and a gesture fair,
That Claudius Lysias, cynic as he was
That moment, seeing could not but admire.

He, on the point to bid the youth remain,
Wavering, not quite persuaded,—at the door,
Bowing his different bow, stood Shimei;
That sight and contrast fixed his wavering mind.
"Stay thou, my lad," abruptly he exclaimed—
Wherewith another fall the countenance fell
Of Shimei, cringing, to his footsteps glued.

"Look ye on one another, ye two Jews,"
The chiliarch in a sudden humor said;
"I have a fancy I should like to see
How two reciprocal accusers such
As you are, rogues both — though one young, one old,
In roguery — if your mutual witness hold —
I say, the fancy takes me to observe
How two accusers of each other, like
Yourselves, confronted in close quarters thus,
Will severally enjoy each other's stare."

An indescribable something in the tone
Of Claudius Lysias speaking thus, or look
Perhaps, couched in the eye or on the face
Playing, signified clear to Shimei
That the same words were differently meant
To Stephen and to him; spoken to him
In earnest, in but pleasantry to Stephen.
Stephen's high air, in proud sense of his worth
Wronged by misdoubt, had Shimei led astray.
He saw it as a sign of prosperous suit —
Doubtless against himself — just finished there.
Already tuned to fear, his conscious mind,

Quite disconcerted by this fresh surprise
Of some detection that he could not guess,
Suddenly wrote abroad on all his mien
A patent full conviction of himself.
As more and more his heart misgave him, worse
Ever and worse his brow was discomposed.

The lively opposite of Shimei's change
Was meantime making Stephen's face more fair.
He, at the chiliarch's mating of himself
With Shimei, though in veriest raillery meant,
Felt all the soul of manliness in him
Stung to its most resistant; as he turned,
Obedient to the chiliarch's word, and looked
At Shimei, such transfigurement there passed
Upon him that he stood there glorified.
An infinite repellence seemed to ray
From out his eyes, and put impassable
Remove between him and that other, while
Ascendance, as peculiar to a race
And rank of being wholly different,
Endued him, like a natural right to reign.
Such kingly to such servile seen opposed,
Surprised the chiliarch into altered mood.

"Enough," said he; and, writing while those stayed,
He gave to Shimei what he wrote to read.
It was a letter Shimei should himself
Convey to Felix governor; it ran:
"Who brings this is a rascal, as I judge;
He comes to accuse the Jewish prisoner Paul.
Detain him, if thee please, to see the end;
The end should be perhaps a cross for *him!*"
Wincing, the miscreant read; he, reading, felt
Draw, from Rome's hand, the coil about his neck.
Choking for speech, he, ere he found it, heard
The chiliarch say, with voice hard like a flint:
"Thou hast thine errand; tarry not, but go.
Nay, bide a moment; let the youngster see
What message I have given thee to bear;
Then, if so chance thou lose it on the way,
He can supply thy lack of carefulness!"

His air that of the miser who, compelled,
Gives up gold hoarded, like his own heart's blood,
Shimei, with griping pangs, in sick recoil
Of grudging overmastered to submit,
Yielded, as if he were withholding it,
The hateful letter into Stephen's hand.

Stephen, as one not daring otherwise,
Deigned a reluctant look, that, seeking not,
Yet seized, the sense of that which Shimei showed;
Softened, he gave the parchment back to him.

Prodded with such oblique sarcastic spur
To heed of sinister commission such,
Shimei withdrew, a miserable man.

The chiliarch then to Stephen — who, at once
Pity of Shimei's utter wretchedness,
Shame of his utter abjectness, conceived —
Said, with changed tone: "My lad, I think thee true;
That miscreant vexed me into petulance.
Thou hast not altogether missed thy mark
In coming hither now, although I thus
Seem to let Shimei for the present slip.
Follow him, if thou wilt, to Cæsarea.
With letter of Bellerophon in charge,
He carries his own sentence thither hence;
Watch it — if slow in execution, sure!"

Sobered by triumph, and not triumphing,
Made pensive rather, Stephen went away.

Forth from the hour when Shimei, so dismissed,
Shrank out of presence at Antonia
Collapsed in spirit as in mien and port,
He to the end was seen an altered man.
Dejected, absent, like a criminal
Convicted of his crime, sentenced to die,
Though day of death unfixed, imprisoned not,
Nay, moving, as if free, about the world,
To view not different from his fellow-men,
Yet with a sense forever haunting him
Of doom uncertainly suspended still
Above him, that at any moment might
In avalanche descend upon his head—
So he lived joyless, the elastic spring
Broken that buoyed him to his wickedness.
But loth he had to Cæsarea gone,
Where, with wry looks and deprecation vain,
He gave the letter to the governor;
Had he, to ease his case, dared fail the trust,
The failure would have failed his case to ease,
Nay, rather, would have harder made his case,
Since Stephen could report what he did not,
And could besides report his negligence.
But Shimei dared not fail; he knew offence,

Added, of disobedience, would but draw
Speedier the dreaded danger ruining down.

Joy is to some a spring of energy,
Which failing, all their force for action fails—
They having in themselves no virtue proof
Against the palsying touch ill fortune brings;
Of such was Shimei. In his broken state,
His measures he took feebly, without hope.
The wish—which with the expectation joined
Would have made hope—yea, even the very wish,
That life and strength of hope, was well-nigh dead
In him; for he no longer now desired
The thing he wrought for still, under constraint
Of habit, and that strange necessity
Which sense of many eyes upon him fixed
To watch him working the familiar wont
Of Shimei, bred within this wretched man,
Forcing him like a fate.

Fit tool he found
In one Tertullus—hireling Roman tongue,
Or function mere, not organ—who, for price,
Spoke customary things accusing Paul
To Felix, for the Jews; these joined their voice

In sanction of the truth of what he said.
But Paul denying their base charges all,
Denying and defying to the proof,
The governor postponed them for a time.
Paul he remanded into custody,
But bade with courteous ways distinguish him;
Whereof the secret cause was, not a sense
In Felix of the righteousness of Paul,
With therefore sweet magnanimous desire
To grace him what in loyalty he could —
Of no such height was Felix capable —
The cause none other was than Shimei;
Who Paul however served not, but himself.

For Shimei dreaded what he seemed to seek,
The sentence "Guilty," at the judgment-bar
Of Felix on this prisoner Paul pronounced;
Dreaded it, lest appeal therefrom be claimed
By Paul to the imperial ear at Rome.
He himself, Shimei, then might be compelled
To go likewise the same unwelcome way,
Though witness and accuser only named,
Yet labelled target for suspicious eyes,
Where eyes suspicious oft portended doom.

So he to Felix — less with words than signs,
Mysterious looks and reticences deep,
As of a man who could, if but he would,
And were it wise, tell much that, left untold,
Might well be guessed from things kept back, yet thus,
And thus, and thus (in Shimei's pantomime)
Winked with the eye and with the shoulder shrugged —
Hint signalled that there hid a gold mine here,
For who, with power like his, conjoined the skill
To make it yield its treasure to demand;
This Paul had wealthy friends who gladly would
Buy at large price indulgences for him.
Let Felix hold out hopes, deferring still,
Suffer his friends to come and visit Paul,
Give hearings to his case, but naught decide,
Weary him out, and them, with long delays —
Till a realm's ransom woo his clutch at last.

Now Shimei thus consummately contrived;
For Felix was a mercenary soul,
Who governed in the spirit of a slave.
He, therefore, doubting not that Shimei

(Confessed the player of a double part,
Pander to him, accuser for the Jews)
Was all the rascal that the chiliarch guessed,
Yet deemed he saw his profit in the man.
He could use Shimei to his own behoof,
In winning what he coveted from Paul;
Meantime remitting not his hold on him
For final expiation of his crimes.
The two, well fitted to each other, thus
Played each his several sordid game with each,
And neither by the other was deceived,
Both equally incapable of trust,
As equally unworthy to be trusted—
Until, two years accomplished, Felix fell
From power at Cæsarea; when, his greed
Long disappointed of its glut of gain
From Paul, he left him there in prison. He hoped
The dreaded accusation of the Jews
For his abuse of power, surpassing bound,
Might less fierce follow him to Rome, should he,
By that injustice added, in their eyes
His thousands of injustices atone.

Moreover Felix hated Paul, as hates

The upbraided ever his upbraider, when,
The conscience yielding, yet the will withstands.
For, during the imprisonment of Paul,
And that prolonged delay of trial due
Him, this base freedman — basely raised to be
A ruler — as a pleasure to his wife,
Devised a feast of eloquence for her.
She was a Jewess, beautiful as vile,
And as in beauty brilliant, so in wit;
She would enjoy it, like a spectacle,
To sit, in emulated state, a queen
Beside her husband in his judgment-hall,
And there, at ease reclined, her lord's delight,
In her resplendent and voluptuous bloom,
Disport herself at leisure, eye and ear
Tasting their satisfaction to the full,
To see and hear her famous countryman
Expound his doctrine and defend his cause.
Not often, in his rude Judæan seat
Of government in banishment, could he
Proffer the stately partner of his throne
An equal hope of entertainment rare.

So, royal in their pomp of progress, came,

One day, the lustful Felix with his bride,
Adulterous Drusilla, guilty pair!
And, on his throne of judgment seating him,
Bade Paul before them, in his prisoner's chain,
To burn the splendors of his oratory
In pleading for the faith of Jesus Christ —
Fresh pastime to the cloyed and jaded sense
For pleasure those voluptuaries brought!
Uncalculated thrills, not of delight,
That lawless Roman ruler had purveyed
Himself, to chase each other in their chill
Procession through the currents of his blood,
And, shuddering, shoot along his nerves, and freeze
His marrow! — conscience in him her last sign
Making perhaps that day.

But will he heed?
Or will the terrors of the world to come
Vainly appal him with the eternal fear?

BOOK VI.

PAUL BEFORE FELIX.

Paul discourses solemnly before Felix and his queen Drusilla, treating the topics of righteousness, self-control, and impending judgment. The effect is to make Felix show visible signs of discomposure on his judgment-seat. Drusilla, apprehensive of consequences disastrous to herself from her wicked husband's awakened remorse and fear, invokes the intervention of Simon, that Cyprian Jewish sorcerer who had at first been instrumental in bringing the guilty pair together. Simon plays upon the superstition of Felix with his pretended magic arts.

PAUL BEFORE FELIX.

The power of the Most High, descending, fell
On Paul, as, led of soldiers, he came in,
Bound, at the mercy of the governor,
And took his station in that presence proud.
At once, but without observation, changed
Became the parts of Felix and of Paul.
Paul, from a prisoner of Felix, now
To Felix was as captor and as judge;
And Felix was as prisoner, bound, to Paul.

Paul his right hand in manacles stretched forth,
As if it were a scepter that he swayed,
And said: "Most excellent lord Felix, hear,
And thou, Drusilla, unto Felix spouse!
Obedient, at thy bidding, I am come
To make thee know the faith in Jesus Christ,
And wherefore I obey it, and proclaim.
Know, then, that Jesus, He of Nazareth,
The Crucified of Calvary, is Christ,
The Christ of that Jehovah God Most High
Who by His word created heaven and earth,

And Him anointed to be Lord of all.
God was incarnate in Him here on earth,
To reconcile the world unto Himself;
And I beseech men — I, ambassador
From Him, as if the Lord God did by me
Beseech — beseeching them, 'Be reconciled
To God.'

"For all men everywhere are found
By wicked works God's enemies; on all,
God's wrath, weight insupportable, abides;
A message this, that down from heaven He brought,
That Christ of God, that Savior of the world.
But His atonement lifts the load of wrath,
Which down toward hell the sinking spirit weighed,
Lifts, nay, transmutes it to a might of love,
Which bears the spirit soaring up to heaven.
'Believe in Jesus, and be reconciled
To God'; that is the gospel which I preach.
Obey my gospel, and be saved — rebel,
And pray the mountains to fall down on thee
To hide thee from the wrath of God, and hide
Thee from the wrath, more dreadful, of the Lamb.
For Lamb was Jesus, when on Calvary

In sacrifice for sin He died; but when,
Resurgent from the tomb, above all height
Into the heaven of heavens He rose, and sat
On the right hand of glory and of power
With God, then the Lamb slain from far before
The world was founded, by His blood our guilt
To purge, as capable of wrath became,
As He before was capable of love.
He burns against unrighteousness, in flame
Which, kindling on the wicked, them devours.
There is no quenching of that fearful flame,
As ending none is there of what it burns;
The victim lives immortally, to feed
The immortal hunger of that vengeful flame.
It swifter than the living lightning flies,
To fasten on its victim in his flight;
No refuge is there in the universe
For fugitive from it. Thou, Felix, knowest
No hider can elude the ranging eyes,
No runner can outrun the wingéd feet,
No striver can resist the griping hands,
That to the emperor of the world belong;
Whom Cæsar wishes, Cæsar has for prey."

Paul fixed his gaze point-blank on Felix while
These things he said, not as with personal aim —
Which might have been resented, being such,
Resented, and thereby avoided quite —
Rather as if, through body, he beheld
His hearer's soul, and set it with his eyes
Far forward into the eternal world,
And there saw the fierce flame he spoke of, fast
Adhering or inhering, burn that soul,
With burning unescapable by flight
Or refuge through the universe of God.
Paul's vision was so vivid that his eyes
Imprinted what he saw upon the soul
Of Felix, that almost he saw it too.
He stared and listened, with that thought intense
Wherewith sometimes the overmastering mind
Will blind the eyesight and the hearing blur.

A sense of insecurity in power,
Bred in him by his consciousness of crime,
With dread, too, of the moment, then perhaps
Already nigh! when that omnipotence,
That omnipresence, that omniscience, Rome's,
Might beset *him*, to cut him off from hope —

This feeling blindly wrought the while beneath,
Like struggling earthquake, to unsettle him;
Thus weakened, half unconsciously, his will
Fell childlike-helpless in the power of Paul.
Now fear hath torment, and to Felix, prey
Of fear with torment, Paul still added fear;
Perhaps his fear intolerable grown
Might save the sufferer from the thing he feared!
Paul further said: "O Felix, Cæsar's sway
Over this world, inevitable thus,
Subduing all, is yet but image pale
Of the supreme dominion absolute
Which to Christ Jesus in the heaven belongs.
The captives of the emperor need but wait
Patient a while and sure release arrives;
Since death at least, to all, or soon or late,
Comes, one escape at last from Cæsar's power,
Who owns no empire in that world beyond.
But of that world beyond, no end, no bound,
Whither we all must flee in fleeing hence,
Still the Lord Christ abides eternal King;
Death is but door to realm of His more wide.
Here, the sheathed sword of His avenging ire
Will sometimes touch, undrawn, with blunted edge,

The wincing conscience of the wicked man
That knows himself a criminal unjudged.
Those touches are the mercy of the Lord
That would betimes the guilty soul alarm;
Those pains of conscience are the smouldering fires
Which, quenched not now in sin-atoning blood,
Will, blown to fury, by and by burst forth,
And, fuelled of the substance of the soul,
That cannot moult its immortality,
One inextinguishable vengeance burn.

"'Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be ye
Instructed, judges of the earth;' so God
Cries in our Scriptures in the ears of men.
'Kiss ye the Son,' He says, 'in homage kiss
The Son of Mine anointing, Christ the Lord,
Kiss Him lest He be angry, and His wrath
Ready to be enkindled you devour.
But in the living scriptures of the soul
Itself, the holy word of God in man,
The selfsame admonition beats and burns—
If men would read it and would understand!
The raging of desire not satisfied,
The sickness of the surfeit of desire,

The ravages of passion uncontrolled,
And waste of being, by itself consumed,
To bury or deface what else were fair—
Like lava spouted from the crater's mouth
Of the volcano burning its own bowels
To belch them torrent over fertile fields —
These things, O Felix, in the conscious heart,
Are muffled footfalls of oncoming doom."

Peculiar commination seemed to flame,
Volcanic, in Paul's manner as he spoke.
One might have felt the figure prophecy —
For some fulfilment in this present world
Impending to be symbol of his thought—
His likening of the self-consuming soul,
Disgorging desolation round about,
To a volcano its own entrails burning,
And in eruption pouring them abroad;
So real, so living, so in imminent act,
Paul's speaking made his fiery simile.
Drusilla, when, long after, with her son
Agrippa, born to Felix, overwhelmed
In that destruction from Vesuvius
Which under ashen rain and lava flood

Pompeii rolled with Herculaneum,
Like Sodom and Gomorrah whelmed again!—
Drusilla then, despairing, for one fierce
Fleet instant — instant endless, though so fleet —
Saw, as from picture branded on her brain,
Heard, as from echo hoarded in its cells,
The very image of the speaker's form,
His posture, gesture, features in their play,
These, and the tones, reliving, of the voice
Wherewith, in Cæsarea judgment-hall,
He fulmined, yea, as if this self-same wo!

But Paul, no pause, immitigably said:
"Belshazzar, Babylonian king of old,
Once in a season of high festival
Held in his palace with a thousand lords,
Saw visionary fingers of a hand
Come out upon the palace walls and write.
Then that king's countenance was changed in him,
In answer to the trouble of his thoughts;
The very jointings of his loins were loosed,
And his knees, shaken, on each other smote.
In language that he did not understand,
But prophet Daniel told the sense to him,

Belshazzar had his own swift ruin read.
Thus, O lord Felix, in our hours of feast,
Oft, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN,
Dread warning to us that the end is come,
That we have been full proved and wanting found,
That now our vantage must another's be—
Appalling words of final doom from God,
In lurid letters live along the walls
Of the soul's pleasure-house—for who will heed!
Remorses, doubts, recoils, forebodings, fears,
And fearful lookings for of judgment nigh,
Previsions flashed on the prophetic soul
Refusing to be hooded not to see—
These are handwritings on the wall from God;
They, syllabling the sentence of His ire,
Spell MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN,
For pleasure-lovers lost in lust and pride.
Well for Belshazzar, if betimes he heed!"

Had Felix been alone, deep in the dark,
And a wide waste of solitude around,
A comfort it had seemed to him to loose
One mighty agitation of his frame
And shiver his blood-curdling terror off;

Or, in one wanton, wild, voluptuous cry,
Shriek it into the startled universe.
But, seated there upon his throne of power,
Drusilla by his side regarding him,
To tremble, like a culprit being judged,
Before a culprit waiting judgment! He,
With last resistant agony of will,
Kept moveless his blanched lips, and on his seat
Sat stricken upright, and so stared at Paul.

There Paul stood tranquil, choosing thunderbolts,
And this the thunderbolt that last he launched:
"Hearken, O Felix. In the clouds of heaven,
Attended by the angels of His might,
The Lord Christ Jesus I behold descend.
The trumpet of the resurrection sounds,
And sea and land give up their wakened dead;
These all to judgment hasten at His call:
The books are opened and the witness found;
All the least thoughts of men, with all their words
And deeds, all their dumb motions of desire,
Their purposes, and their endeavors all,
Are written in the record of those books.
They blaze out in the light of that great day.

Like lightning, fixed from fleeting, on the sky;
Deem not one guilty can his guilt conceal.
A parting of the evil and the good;
The good at His right hand He bids sit down,
The awful Judge, omnipotent as just;
The evil, frowning, bids from Him depart.
Swift, them departing — who would not know God,
And not obey the gospel of His Son —
He, taking vengeance, follows in their flight
With flaming fire and dreadful punishment,
Destruction everlasting from His face,
From the Lord's face, and glory of His power!"

The shudder that had slept uneasy sleep
Within the breast of Felix lulling it,
Woke startled at these minatory words
Spoken as with the voice of God by Paul.
That couchant shudder from its ambush broke,
And openly ran wantoning over all
The members of the terror-stricken man.
But the cry clamoring in him for escape,
To ease the anguish of his mortal fear,
Felix found strength to modulate to this,
In forced tones uttered, and with failing breath:

"Go thy way this time, Paul; at season fit
Hereafter I will call for thee again."

The soldier duly led his prisoner out,
And Felix was full easily rid of Paul;
Of Paul, but of Paul's haunting presence not.
The image of that orator in chains,
The solemn echo of the words he spoke,
Swam before Felix, sounded in his ears,
So real, the real world round him seemed less real.

Drusilla, to her discomposure, found
Her husband strangely alien from his spouse;
The blandishments so potent with him late
Lost on an absent or repellent mind.
The awe of Felix under Paul's discourse
She had remarked with unconcerned surprise·
She now recalled it with a doubt, a fear.
The jealous thought woke in her: 'If my lord
Should, overwrought in conscience, cast me off!
What byword and what hissing then were I,
Stranded and branded an adulteress!
I, who the scion of a kingly house,
Haughty Antiochus Epiphanes,
Haughtily spurned as suitor for my hand,

Because he would not for my sake be Jew;
Who wedded then Azizus, eastern king,
Willing to win me at the price I fixed;
Who next with scandal parted from his bed,
To snatch this dazzle of a Roman spouse—
I to be now by him flung to the dogs!
All at the beck of an apostate Jew,
Arraigned a culprit at his judgment-bar!
Drusilla, rouse thee, say, It must not be!
Drusilla, arm thee, swear, It shall not be!'

She summoned straight that Cyprian sorcerer who
Had played the pander's part between herself
And Felix, when they twain at first were brought
In guilt together. "Simon, know," she said,
"I with cause hate this Jewish prisoner Paul.
He, insolence intolerable, is fain
To come between my Roman lord and me.
Withstand him, and undo his hateful spell."

"His hateful spell, O stately queen, my liege,"
Said Simon, "I far rather would assay
Unbinding from thy spouse's soul enthralled,
Than him withstand, the binder of that spell,

Meeting him face to face. At Paphos once,
Of Cyprus, Elymas, a master mind
In magic — at the court proconsular
Of Sergius Paulus, regent of the isle,
Wielding great power — withstood this self-same
Paul.
But Paul denounced a curse deipotent
Against him, and forthwith upon his eyes
A mist fell and a darkness, that he walked
Wandering in quest of one to lead him, late
Redoubtable magician, by the hand.
This conjuration on the conjurer,
Himself proconsul Sergius Paulus saw,
And, overpowered with wonder and with fear,
Roman and governor as he was, became
Fast docile dupe and devotee to Paul.

"Perhaps indeed there was a cause for this
Older in date than such a feat of Paul's.
Long years before, when Paul and he were young,
By chance they fared together on the way
Damascus-ward out of Jerusalem,
When, nigh Damascus, of a sudden, Paul
On Sergius tried a novel magic trick.

In broad noon, with unclouded sun ablaze
Above him, burning all that tract of sand,
He flashed a sheen of mimic lightning forth,
With stage effect of thunder overhead
Muttering words. Thereon as dead fell Paul,
Yet to that unintelligible voice
From heaven intelligible answer made,
Pretending dialogue with some unseen
High dweller in the upper air, with whom
Colluding, he thenceforth his spells of power
Might surer, deadlier, fling on whom he would.
Sergius was then too full of youth to yield ;
The lusty blood in him fought off the spell ;
But somewhat wrought upon, no less, was he,
And secretly, in mind and will, prepared
To fall in weaker age a prey to Paul.
A potent master Paul is in his kind,
Owning some secret from us others hid,
That makes our vaunts against him void and vain.
I would not needlessly his curse provoke
By too close quarters with him front to front.
His spell on Felix I may hope to solve,
Let me but have thy husband by himself,

In privileged audience safe apart from Paul;
I will see Felix, but Paul let me shun."

So Simon to his moody master went,
And, well dispensing with preamble, said:
"What will mine excellent lord Felix please
Command the service of his servant in?"
"Unbidden thou art present," Felix frowned.
"So bidden I retire," the mage replied.
"Nay, tarry," with quick wanton veer of whim,
Said Felix, "tarry and declare to me,
If with exertion of thy skill thou canst,
What is it that this hour perturbs my thought?
Answer me that, pretender to be wise,
Or own thy weird pretensions nothing worth.
No paltering, no evasion, doubling none
In ambiguity like oracle,
But instant, honest, simple, true reply;
Else, I have done with all thy trumpery tricks,
Haply, too, with some certain fruits thereof
That thee buy little thanks, as me small joy."

"My master pleases to make hard demand,
In couple with condition hard, to-day,"
The sorcerer, with dissembled pleasure, said.

Simon full ready felt to meet his test;
For, in an antechamber to the hall
Of judgment, he, with Shimei too, had lurked,
And, overhearing Paul's denouncement, marked
The trepidation of the judge's mien.
"Lord Felix suffers from an evil spell
Cast on him by a wicked conjurer;"
So, with deep calculation of effect,
The sorcerer to the sovereign firmly said.
"A hit — perhaps," said Felix, some relief
Of tension to his conscience-crowded mind
Welcoming already in the hint conveyed;
"Repeat to me," he added, keen to hear,
"Repeat to me the phrasing of the spell;
That I may know it not a groping guess,
But certain knowledge, what thou thus hast said."

That challenge flung to Simon's hand the clue
He needed for his guidance in the maze.
He sees the Roman's superstitious mind
In grapple with imaginative awe
Infused by recollection of those words
Barbaric — of comminatory sound,
Though understood not, therefore dreaded more —

Which Paul, two several times, in his discourse,
Had solemnly recited in his ear.
"The spell," he said, "O Felix, that enthralls
Thee was of three Chaldæan words composed;
But one word was repeated, making four.
I dare not utter those dire syllables
In the fixed order which creates the spell.
My wish is to undo, and not to bind."

Felix was frightened, like a little child
Told ghostly stories in the dead of night;
He watched and waited, with set eye intense.
The conjurer, standing in struck attitude,
Made with his voice an inarticulate sign
Intoned in tone to thrill the listening blood.
Thereon, in silence, through the opening door,
With gliding motion, a familiar stole
Into the chamber, which now more and more,
To Felix's impressionable fears,
As if a vestibule to Hades was.
That noiseless minister to Simon gave
Into his master's hand a rod prepared.
"Hearken, lord Felix," low the conjurer said,
"Hearken and heed. Well needs it thou, with me,

Fail now in nothing through a mind remiss.
Hear thou aright, while I aright reverse
The order of the phrasing of that spell.
Beware thou think it even no otherwise
Than as I give it, weighing word and word.
I turn the sentence end for end about,
UPHARSIN, TEKEL, MENE, MENE, say;
All is not done, still keep thy mind intent,
And, with thine eyes now, as erst with thine ears,
Watch what I do, and let thy will consent."

Therewith his wizard wand he waved in air,
As who wrote viewless words upon the wind.
A hollow reed the wand he wielded was,
With secret seed asleep of fire enclosed.
This, at the end that in his hand he held;
Powder of sulphur at the other end
Was hidden in the hollow of the reed.
The sulphur and the fire, unconscious each
Of other, had, though neighboring, since apart,
Slept; for the sorcerer's minion brought the rod,
As first the sorcerer held it, levelled true.
But with the motion of the magian's hand,
The dipping virgule sent the ember down

The polished inner of its chamber-walls,
And breath let in to blow it living red,
Until it touched the sulphur at the tip.
Issue of fume there followed, edged with flame,
And wafting pungent odor from the vent,
Which, woven in circlet and in crescent, seemed
To knit a melting legend on the air.
"So vanish and be not, thou hateful spell,
And leave this late so vexéd spirit free!"
With mutter of which words, the sorcerer turned
To Felix, and thus farther spoke: "Breathe thou,
Lord Felix, from that bond emancipate.
Yet, that thou fall not unawares again
Beneath its power, use well a countercharm
I give thee, which, both night and day, wear thou
A prophylactic to thy menaced mind.
Gold—let the thought, the motive, the desire,
The purpose, and the fancy, and the dream,
Not leave thee nor forsake thee till thou die.
The sight, the sound, the touch, the clutch, of gold
Is sovereign absolution to a soul
Beset like thine with fear of things to be
Beyond the limit of this mortal state;
But, failing that, the thought itself will serve.

The thought at least must never absent be,
If thou wouldst live a freeman in thy mind."

'Freedman,' he would have said, but did not dare;
He had dared much already in his word,
'Freeman,' so nigh overt allusion glanced
At the opprobrious quality of slave,
Out of which Felix sprang to be a king.
To that, contempt and hatred of a lord
Served but from hard self-interest and from fear
Had irresistibly pressed Simon on
Beyond the bound of calculated speech.
Therewith, and waiting not dismissal, both,
The sorcerer and his minion, silently
Slid out of presence, and left Felix there
To rally as he might to his true self.
But, not too trustful to his sorcery,
Simon thought well to follow and confirm
The influence won on Felix through his art,
With worldly wisdom suited to his end.
He bade Drusilla open all access
Ever for Shimei to her husband's ear,
And even from her own treasure help him ply
Felix's avid mind with hope of gold—

Assured to him through earnest oft in hand—
An ample guerdon in due time to come
From Paul's rich friends to buy release for Paul.

At Cæsarea, in the judgment hall
That day, a solemn crisis of his life,
To Felix, he not knowing, there had passed.
Successfully, with sad success! he had
Resisted conscience in her last attempt,
Her last and greatest, to alarm a soul
Sufficiently to save it from itself.
At length, with the still process of the days
Dulled, and besides with opiate medicines drugged,
That conscience, so resisted, sank asleep,
Sank dead asleep in Felix, to awake
Never again. He indeed sent for Paul
Afterward oft, and talked with him at large;
But always only in that sordid hope—
Blown to fresh flame with seasonable breath,
That never failed, from Shimei, prompt in watch
To play on his cupidity—the hope
Of princely ransom from his prisoner won.

Such hope, so kept alive, led this bad man—
Although he hated Paul for shaking him

To terror, and to open shameful show
Of terror, in his very pitch of pride—
To palter with his prisoner, month by month,
Until the end came of his long misrule.
Then, hope deferred, defeated hope at last,
Let loose the hatred that in leash had lain
Of avarice, in the kennel of that breast,
And Felix found a sullen feast for it
In leaving Paul at Cæsarea bound.

BOOK VII.

"TO CÆSAR."

Paul, in preferred alternative to being judged, as was proposed, by his murderous fellow-countrymen, appeals to Cæsar. He is in consequence embarked on a ship for Rome. With him sail certain kindred and friends of his, young Stephen among them. Fellow-voyagers with him are also Felix and Drusilla, fallen now from power and under cloud at Rome. Shimei and Simon the sorcerer are of the company. The voyage is described, together with some of the notable prospects of the coasts along which the vessel sails. Shimei plots against the life of Paul. His plot is thwarted by young Stephen, and the culprit is thrown into dungeon in the hold under chains.

"TO CÆSAR."

During the years of his captivity
Under that wanton hand at Cæsarea,
Paul's sister, with her Stephen, brought their home
Thither, and there abode, for love of Paul;
That they might minister to him, and be
Ministered to by him in overflow
Of his far more exceeding rich reward.
Thither came also others of the Way,
Drawn by like love, to serve the same desire.

Of these was martyr Stephen's widow, Ruth,
A stately lady, with the matron's crown
Of glory in her wealth of silver hair,
And with the invisible pure aureole
Of living saintship radiant round her brow.
With her, a daughter, left to Ruth alone
Among her children — wedded all beside.
Her youngest-born, and fairest, was this one,
Eunicé named; a gift from God to Ruth
After her husband's martyrdom bestowed.

Euníce bore her father's image, lined
Softer with girlhood and with yielding youth,
Both in her features and her character.
The light that in her lovely countenance
Shone lovelier, was not playful, did not flash,
But sat there tempered to an equal beam,
Selené-like, that one might look upon,
From far or near, dwelling however long,
With sense of rest and healing to the eye;
You seemed to gaze upon the evening star
In sole possession of a twilight sky.
It was as if the father's zeal intense —
Which, kindling on his way to martyrdom,
Shone into brightness dazzling like the sun —
Descended to the daughter, were suffused
So, and so qualified, with woman's love,
That it undazzling like the moon became.
Eunicé, such in queenly womanhood,
Already to young Stephen was betrothed;
They waited only till the years should bring
Full ripeness, with meet circumstance, to wed.

Mary of Magdala kinswoman was
To Ruth. She, long afflicted, from before

Her marriageable season, with the haunt
In her of evil spirits vagabond
From the abyss, had, then to woman grown,
Met Jesus in His rounds of doing good
And been by Him delivered from her woe.
Seven demons, at His word, went forth from her,
Foul inmates of a mansion passing fair.
Mary to her Divine Deliverer gave
Her life thenceforth one long oblation up.
With other women, like herself in love
Of Him, she followed that Immanuel
Whithersoever He went about the world,
And of her treasure lavished on His need.
She stood bewailing when they crucified
Her Lord, and, after, at His sepulcher
The earliest, ere the breaking of the morn,
Saw two fair-shining angels clothed in white,
One at the head, the other at the feet,
Sit where the body of the Lord had lain.
These talked with Mary, who then turning saw,
But knew not, Jesus, face to face with her.
But Jesus to the weeping woman said:
"Mary!" and, in the hearing of her name,
She forthwith knew the voice that uttered it.

In her delight of love, she would have touched
His person, to assure still more her mind,
Save that again that voice, forestalling, gave
Enough assurance for such faith as hers.
Mary refrained her hand, but full well knew
No fleeting phantom, no dissolving show,
No spirit only, angel of the dead,
Stood there before her in the form of Him;
But her Lord Christ Himself, His flesh and blood.

This Mary Magdalené, in such wise
First to such joy delivered from such woe,
Then witness of so much theophany,
Thenceforward lived, unwedded to the end,
A life of watching for her Lord's return,
True to His promise, in the clouds of heaven;
Not idle watching, watching unto prayer
And unto almsdeeds to His glory done.
In the due sequel of the days, she came,
Bidden by her kinswoman Ruth, to share
Her widow's home with her and help her peace.
Thus then, the much-experienced Mary, meek
With wisdom and with holy meekness wise
(Her sorrow all to cheerful patience turned)

Unnoticed, not unfelt, as light, as strength
Unconscious, from the Source of strength, of light
Daily renewed, for guidance and support
To all within her happy neighborhood —
She also, Mary Magdalené, came
To Cæsarea, yoked in fellowship
With Ruth and Rachel, ministrant to Paul.

These all, with others, still intent to ease,
If but by sharing, what to Paul befell,
Were minded to go with him even to Rome —
When Festus, following Felix dispossessed,
Sent Paul away to Cæsar's judgment-seat,
Fulfilling so the wretched Shimei's fear.
For — Festus asking Paul (accused afresh
Before him from Jerusalem by Jews
Afresh to hope reviving with the change
From Felix to a different rulership):
"Wilt thou hence go unto Jerusalem,
And there by thine own countrymen be judged?" —
The wary wise apostle, well forewarned
Touching the deadly ambush, to waylay
Him in the journey thither, set once more
By Shimei, desperate and forlorn, had said:

"I am a prisoner at the judgment-bar
Of Cæsar; to my countrymen have I
No wrong done, as thou knowest; if any crime
Be mine, if I have perpetrated deed
Worthy of death, I do not shun to die.
But if of such act I be innocent,
Then no man may to them deliver me.
Roman am I, to Cæsar I appeal."
That answer was as word omnipotent,
To be unsaid, gainsaid, resisted, never;
And Festus was its servant and its thrall.

There sailed a ship of Adramyttium
(In Mysia of the Asian Province west,
From Lesbos in a deep recess withdrawn
Of bay in the Ægean, neighboring Troy)
Which touched at Cæsarea in its course
Coastwise, now northing on the Syrian shore.
Festus on board this vessel quartered Paul,
With soldiers to convoy him safe to Rome;
A maniple, by a centurion
Commanded, Julius named, a Roman he
Worthy of the imperial name he bore.
For he of clement grace was capable,

And of sagacity to know a man,
Though of despiséd race and charged with crime,
And, knowing, yield to him his manhood's claim.
Julius the profit of his virtue reaped;
He, in the issue of that voyage, will
Through favoring Paul save his own soul alive.

Those kin and lovers of the prisoner, who
Had for his name to Cæsarea come,
Would not forsake him sailing thence away;
They all, in one accord of fellowship,
Willed to sail with him on his way to Rome.
Besides these, there was Luke, a loyal soul,
Well learnéd in the lore of medicine,
Who loved Paul, and with joy his right hand lent,
Joining thereto the service of his eyes,
To fix for the apostle, at his need,
In written record, his thick-coming thoughts —
Ease for those weary organs overworn
With labors and with watchings; haply, too,
Touched with effect from that excess of light!
Historian of the voyage likewise Luke,
As, guided by the heavenly-guided Paul,
Who thus redeemed long prison hours else waste,

Historian of the life of Christ the Lord.
So many, with a man from Macedon,
A faithful, Aristarchus named, made up
The little company who loving hearts
Linked, shield to shield, in phalanx fencing Paul.
If they could serve him little on the sea,
At least they could be with him there; and then,
Should long delays of law, or of caprice,
Hold him still bound in Rome, they would be nigh
To bring him, daily, comfort of their love.
So, doubting not, not fearing, all for love,
These changed their fixéd gear for portable,
And on that ship of Adramyttium,
Facing whatever fortune unforeseen,
Cheerfully sailed — to tempest and to wreck!

Scarce well bestowed within that Asian bark,
Riding at anchor in her rock-fenced haven,
Those Christian pilgrims felt unwonted stir
Rouse round them on the crowded deck, with surge
On surge of movement, of expectancy,
As when a rising surf beats the sea-beach;
While, huddling here, here parting, all made way
To let who seemed high passengers of state

Enter with gorgeous pomp and pageantry,
Forerun and followed by a various train.
Felix it was, in sumptuous litter borne,
Drusilla with him, looking still the queen:
From power they fallen, were fallen not from pride.
With them, besides their troop of servitors,
Came other two, strange contrasts: Simon one,
The conjurer, fast to their joint fortune bound,
Beginning to be gray with rime of age,
As sinister grown in look through habit of guile;
A little lad tripped lightly by the side
Of Simon (who his evil genius looked)
Leading him by the hand upon the ship.
This little lad was little Felix, son
Of Felix and Drusilla, and dear to them,
Felix Agrippa the lad's double name.
Felix went summoned from his province back
To give at Rome account of his misrule.
Behind the sorcerer, following in that train,
Went last, as one who unattached would seem,
Shimei, compelled, though prisoner not; he strove
To carry lightly a too heavy heart.
Felix so much from Festus had obtained,
That Shimei should go forward with himself

As witness and accuser both to Paul;
Yet sinister suspicion shadowing him,
With information laid against, the while,
As the ringleader in a plot of crime.
The unhappy legate would at least detach
Thus from his own leagued Jewish foes, the Jew,
The one Jew, who, best knowing and hating him,
With the least scruple the most genius joined
To crowd him falling, to the farthest fall.

Fairly the lading and unlading done,
And all things ready, the good ship puts forth.
The oarsmen sat in triple ranks that rose
Tier above tier along the vessel's side;
With cheer of voice that timed their rhythmic stroke,
They, all together, many-handed, bent
Over the supple oars, well-hung arow,
And beat the waters into yeast and foam.
The wieldy trireme answered to their will,
And, past the towers and domes of Cæsarea,
Along a windless way under the lee
Of sea-walls fending from the bluff southwest,
Pushed to the north beyond the harbor-mouth.
Here the wind took her, freshening from behind,

And, sail all set, they rested from the oar.
Softly and swiftly, with such favoring gale,
They prosper, and, along the storied coast
Close cruising, soon discern the headland height,
Mount Carmel, with his excellency crowned
Of forest, and wide overlooking east
The plain outrolled of great Esdraelon
Washing with waves of green the mountain's feet—
Mountain whereon, in single-handed proof,
Elijah those four hundred priests of Baal
Gave to contempt; and, whence descending, he,
Red with indignant wrath for his Lord God,
By the brook Kishon slew them to His name.
This Paul remembered, as he passed; and deemed
He saw, hallowing the hills of Nazareth,
A halo from the childhood of the Lord.
From horn to horn across a crescent bay,
Embosomed by its arc of shore that curved
From Carmel round to Ptolemais north,
Faring, they could, well inland gazing, catch
A glimpse that vanished of the shapely cone
Of Tabor soaring in his Syrian blue.
Still onward, they next day the ancient seat
Of famous Sidon in Phœnicia reached—

Long ruined now, with her twin city Tyre;
Then, paired with her as mistress of the main,
Sidon sat leaning on her promontory,
Diffused along its northward-sliding slopes,
Like a luxurious queen on her divan.
Her sailors drove her keels to every haven,
And fetched her home the spoil of every clime.
To Farthest Thulé was the ocean wave
White with her sails or spumy to her oars.

Felix's hope of splendid bribe from Paul
Was brighter, that, of those who brought him cheer
In prison, some from wealthy Sidon came.
Here the ship touching, Julius, of his grace,
Granted to Paul the freedom of the shore.
With grateful gladness there, Sidonian friends,
Women and men, with children, welcome him.
Full in mid-winter, lo, a moment's spring!
So did a sudden-blossoming scene of home
Smile briefly bright about this homeless man,
This prisoner of the Lord — for the Lord's sake,
And for his own sake, dear — most human heart!
In whom his office of apostle wrought
To heighten, not to hurt, the faculty,

As it left whole the lovely need, of love.
He went thence clothed upon the more with sense
Of love his from so many, like a shield
Barring his heart from harm ; and in his heart
Love buoyant more to bear what harm must fall.

From Sidon sailing, they, still northward driven
By wind that would not let them as they wished
Southwestward to the south of Cyprus isle
Win with right way the Mysian port, their aim —
So hindered, those Greek seamen warp their wake
With zigzag steering over whitening waves,
Until they feel that current of the sea,
Northwestward with perpetual ocean-stream
Washing the Cyprian shore to easternmost,
Thence veering toward the mainland, and along
The Asian border drawing to the west.
There, on such river in the ocean borne
Whither they will against a wind adverse,
They, wise with much experience of the sea,
Yet in the lee of neighboring Cyprus seek
A pathway sheltered from that roughening wind.
So, forward fairly, the Cilician sea
They traverse, with the mountains on their left,

Sheer through the length of sunny Cyprus drawn,
Building a sea-wall, to break off the wind.
Over against, to be descried, though far —
Well by two hearts on board that vessel felt,
Paul and his sister Rachel — to the north,
Lay the long reach of the Cilician shore.
Those (thither strained their homeward-yearning
eyes)
There, tearful, saw remembered Taurus tower;
Whence river Cydnus rushing snow-cold down,
Wild from his mountain to the stretched-out plain,
Tames him his torrent to a pace more even;
And yields to be a navigable stream
For Tarsus, cleft two-fold, upon his banks,
A seaboard city inland from the sea.

Dear places of the playtime of their youth!
Gray river, with its everlasting flood,
Libation from the mountain to the sea;
The wharves, the ships, the sailors, travelled men,
Motley in garb and polyglot in speech;
The lading landed or to be embarked —
Mysterious bales of costly merchandise
Tempting to guess what treasures might be there! —

The hallowed sabbath in that Hebrew home
Islanded in its sea of heathenism!
The sabbath seasons in the synagogue!
The reverend Scriptures of the Jewish law,
By father and by mother taught to them,
So diligently taught, day after day,
And talked of in their ears, alike when they
Sat in their house and when they walked abroad,
And when they laid them down and when they
rose;
Beheld too for a sign bound on the hand,
Likewise for frontlets worn between the eyes!—
All these things like a flood-tide of the sea
Swelled on those homesick kindred hearts, while
they,
Brother and sister, distant many years
From what they saw, from what much more they
felt,
Seen or unseen, on that familiar shore,
Alien and heathen, yet, being native, sweet,
Lapsed into musing of the pensive past.
Half they in words, but half in silence, mused.

"Far-off by years, yet more by difference far,"

Said Paul to Rachel, "are we two withdrawn
From what we were in our Cilician home.
That dearer is to us to dream of so,
Remembering and imagining, than it were
To see; it is not what we knew it once,
With the child's heart we carried in us then.
We should not find the places that we loved;
Nay, for we should not know them — with these
eyes.
They have not so much changed, but we have
changed."

"Yea, doubtless, changed we are," Rachel replied;
"Yet, I at least, O Saul, not so much changed
But that it would delight me still to see
Those haunts of happy childhood — more endeared
To me, as to my brother more, I know,
From father's and mother's memory hovering there.
I loved my mother and I honored her,
But my own motherhood has taught me how
I might have better loved and honored her!"

"We must not at past failures vainly pine" —
So Paul, to Rachel sorrowing tenderly —
"But rather let them make us wiser now.

Thy lesson, sister, let it teach us both
How to be children to our Father God.
These earthly kinships all are parable
Of the enduring kinships of the skies.
We are to be to God, as children dear,
What parents would their children were to them,
So full of love with fear, of trust with heed,
And imitators of His heavenly ways."

"And is it, brother," Rachel gently asked,
"Indeed to thee so easy ever thus
To lose the earthly in the heavenly thought,
And in the symbol find the symbolized,
That only, Saul? It is not so with me.
I love the letter, and I cling to it—
A little; at least when it is so fair
As I have found it in my motherhood.
The spirit is far fairer, I suppose,
But God has made this letter 'very good'!"

Rachel spoke thus with deprecation sweet,
The while a little liquid sparkle played
Of loving humor in her eyes half turned
Toward Stephen sitting nigh them but apart;
He and Eunicé sat together there.

"Cling to thy lovely letter," Paul replied,
"'A little,' as thou sayest it, not too much—
The 'little,' as the 'not too much,' God's will
For thee, my sister; and, a paradox!
The little will be more when not too much.
It is the spirit makes the letter dear,
Or dearest, as it is itself more dear.
We better love the earthly images
Of things in heaven, when we those heavenly things
Themselves more than their loveliest shadows love."

"O brother," Rachel—suddenly her voice
Sunk to a vibrant low intensity
Of accent—said, hands clasped and eyes upturned
To him, "O brother, when such things thou sayest,
I tremble with unspeakable desire
To be what one must be to think such things.
But it is all too wonderful for me.
That inspiration of the Holy Ghost
Whereby thou knowest what else thou wouldst not know—
Perhaps that helps thee be, as well as know?"

"Nay, sister," Paul replied, "it is not so.
That inspiration is a gift to me

For knowing only, not for being. Yea,
And even my gift to know is not for me,
More than for thee, my Rachel, and for all.
It is that all may know, God makes *me* know.
I profit by my awful trust from God
Of farther vision in His mysteries,
Only as I a faithful steward am
To part to others what I hold from Him:
Freely I have received freely to give.
But besides this there is a grace of God
In Jesus by the Holy Spirit given,
That comes alike to all obedient souls
To help them in the life of holiness.
The habit of the heavenly mind which thou
Attributest to me in what thou askest,
This I have learned, if it indeed be mine,
By being to the Spirit teachable,
Who teaches all as fast as each will learn.
He could far faster teach us, and He would,
If only we were teachable enough.
Alas, we strangely hold the flood-gate down
Not to let all the waiting fulness in.
But what of holy willingness I have
He gives, Who worketh in me both to will

And work, for the good pleasure of His name."

"Amen!" breathed Rachel, in devout accord
With Paul's ascription of all good to Him.

By this, the night had settled on the sea,
An interlunar night bereft of stars,
For the dark azure of the deep was black
To blackness of the overhanging heaven
Hung thick with clouds. "See," Rachel added soon,
"How the sky lowers! God fend us all from storm!
Good night, my brother. David's word for me,
'In peace will I both lay me down and sleep,
For Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell
In safety.'" "Yea, in safety also here,
O sister," Paul said; "for the sea is His,
He holds it in the hollow of His hand."
Brother and sister parted with a kiss—
Kiss from the kindred habit of old time
Dear, but far dearer in a dearer love,
And, with some sense of reconcilement, sweet.
Therewith the sister to her pillow went;
But Paul abode to vigil on the deck.
He pacing to and fro, the night wore on,

And one by one his fellow-passengers
Withdrawing left him more and more alone.

A sheen of phosphorescence on the sea
Kindled along the running vessel's side,
And drew a trail of brilliance in her wake,
Splendid a moment and then vanishing,
Devoured by the immensity of dark
Which made it for that moment so intense.
Paul saw this, less admiring what he saw,
Beautiful though it was and wonderful,
Than musing what it seemed to mean for him:
'So my soul on her voyage through the world
Lights her own pathway as she moves along;
Bright ever where she is she makes her place,
And ever plunges on into the dark
Before her; but her latter end is light!'

Meanwhile, of all the lingerers on the deck
Amid that darkness, only two remained.
These, as they might, watched him now bending there
In wistful gaze over the vessel's side
Downward into the waters weird below:
Stephen was one; the other, Shimei.

But Shimei had crept later on the deck,
When the increasing dark veiled all from view
Save what was moving or what stood upright;
So he knew not of Stephen now reclined,
Motionless in a trance of pleasant dream,
There where Eunicé left him, when she too
With Rachel from the open night retired.
The youth had lapped him in a happy muse
Of memory of the things they twain that eve
Had shared in converse; it was like twilight
Prolonging softer the full light of day.
Shimei thought darkly: 'Could yon leaning form
Lean farther, and embrace indeed the wave
He yearns toward, this enticing murky night!
There were redemption ready-wrought for me —
Who might be spared, forsooth, accusing whom
His own forestalling conscience had condemned,
(So it should look!) and forced him on to die.
"Vengeance is mine and recompense," as saith
Our Moses, hinting of a moment when
"Their foot shall slide." Ha! Ha! It fits the case!
"Their foot shall slide!" Feet may be brought to
slide!
The deck is slippery with the spray; a tip

Forward above, with a trip backward, so,
From underneath'—and Shimei acted out
In pantomimic gesture his quick thought;
'An accidental movement, were it seen,
But it would not be seen. A fine dark night,
No moon, no stars, and the whole hollow sky
Ink-black with clouds that when ere long they break
Will spit ink-rain into an inky sea!
Finger of God! It were impiety
Not to obey a pointing such as this.'
His propense thought plunged him a step toward
Paul.
Stephen hereon, stretched out upon the deck,
Marking the sinister action of the man
Shadowed upon the dark, a denser dark,
Noiselessly gathered up his members all,
Ready to rush at need to rescue, yet
Reserved, alert, to watch and to await,
Like leopard couchant tense in poise to spring.

That instant, a new dimness in the dark,
A swimming outline, figure of a man
Approaching, with a rustle of approach
Hinted, no more, amid the rising wind.

This Stephen knew, and Shimei, both at once.
Shimei recoiled; he thought, 'Well paused for me!
I might have been detected, after all!'
Then, gliding toward that shadowy moving form,
He met — a Roman soldier, front to front,
Nigh Stephen where he lay in ambuscade
Unpurposed, but now vigilant all ear
For what might pass between those men so met.
A sudden shift of phase to Shimei's thought,
In altered phase persistent still the same.
The desperate fancy seized him to essay
Corrupting that custodian of Paul.

A helpless fixed fatuity of hate,
A dull insistent prodding from despair,
Robbed him of reason, while of cunning not:
He could warp wisely toward an end unwise.
Suspected by the Roman, by the Jew
No longer trusted as of old — since seen,
Those years at Cæsarea, changed and chilled
So from his pristine ardor in pursuit
Of Paul — Shimei saw nothing now before
Him in the future but the nearing close
In a blind alley, opening none beyond,

Of the strait way wherein perforce he walked.
One gleam of light, of possible light, ahead,
He now descried. If Paul could somehow be
Utterly cancelled from his case, no Paul
Anywhere longer in the world, and if,
Ah, if, O rapture! Paul could disappear
Confessing guilt by seeming suicide —
That were the one deliverance left to hope,
Hope if forlorn, at least, at least, a hope.
Shimei his foot set softly in the snare.

With slow and sly ambages of approach,
He sounded if the soldier were of stuff
To be in safety tampered with, and how.
Close at his feet, but guarded from their touch
By a low heap of cordage coiled between,
There Stephen lay the while, a breathless corpse,
And listened — with his body and his mind
Both utterly all organ to attend —
As Shimei with that shifty cunning his,
Insidious, like the entrance of disease,
Wormed him into the bosom of his man,
Instilling the temptation, sweet with bribe,
To make away with his Jew prisoner.

It would but give the wretch's wish effect —
So Shimei glozed with subtle speciousness —
Should now his gentle keeper intervene
To end the endless waverings of a mind
On self-destruction bent, a suicide
Who only lacked the courage of despair,
By tossing Paul headforemost overboard.
Three points thereby were gained, and nothing lost:
A criminal would meet his just desert,
One fain to die his heart's desire obtain,
And he, the soldier, no one wiser, take
The profit, gold in hand, of a good deed.
"Thou knowest," the tempter said, "the feel of gold,
The weight," and therewith thrust some pieces broad
Into the soldier's hand, the antepast
And warrant of a ready rich reward.
If question should arise involving him,
Why, nothing easier than to say and swear,
The prisoner, conscious of his guilt, and now
Quite at the end of all his hopes by wile,
Had used the favoring cover of the night
To make a sudden spring into the brine.
He, heedful of his duty and his charge,
Had promptly put the utmost effort forth

To seize him, and defeat the dire attempt.
But desperation was too masterful
In force and quickness, to be so forestalled.
The fates and furies buoyed him overboard
And plumped him to the bottom of the deep.
Then, were his single witness held in doubt,
Why, by good luck, here was a passenger
Who saw the fellow fetch his frenzied leap,
And saw his watchman hold him back in vain;
He, Shimei, would not fail him at the pinch,
To swear him clear of any touch of blame.

The soldier, to this word, had little spoke,
Nothing that might import his secret thought,
Heed giving in blank silence, ominous,
Or hopeful, for his tempter, dubious which.
Now he spoke, saying: "Glibly dost thou talk,
Making the task light, laughable the risk.
Know it is perilous business, this of thine.
Yon Paul appears a prisoner of note,
Whom our centurion, for his reasons, treats
With favor"—"For his reasons, yea; well said,"
Interposed Shimei; "but such reasons fail
Promptly when the purse fails that yields them. End

Already, as I know, was reached with Paul,
When he at Sidon bought his leave to land,
Hoping a rescue." "But," the soldier said,
"Paul seems indeed to be a worthy man."
"A wise head, thou," the wily Jew replied;
"'Seems,'—thou hast once more hit it in that word!
Fair-seeming truly, rotten at the core."
"However that may be," the guard rejoined,
"Rotten or sound the man, it were a deed,
A bold deed, deed of risk and price, to do
What thou requirest." 'Willing,' Shimei thought,
'Willing, but greedy; bid for higher pay!
Bait him his fill, no time for higgling now.'
He said: "Bold enterprises to the bold.
Yea, there is risk; no need to make it small;
It is a soldier I am talking with.
But I will amply match the risk with wage.
Thy peril stint not thou, I not thy pay.
Here is a scrip stuffed out with yellow gold,
Test it for weight, thou earnest it all this night."

The soldier had but meant to parley: now
This toying with temptation by the touch,
Added to his long dalliance through the ear,

Proved penetrant, seductive, so beyond
His forethought, that he stood amazed, appalled,
Listening, to feel how much he was enticed.
He might have yielded to the sorcery,
But Stephen, with an instant instinct wise,
Sudden sprang, speechless, imminent, to his feet.
The soldier at the apparition took
A fine air of indignant virtue on.
"Rascal," said he, "I have trolled thee well along
From point to point and let thee talk and talk,
And my palm tickle with the touch of gold,
Or counterfeit of gold, thou counterfeit
Of man! Thou hast shown thyself for what thou art.
Thy proffered bribe I keep for proof of thee;
But thou, thou goest with me my prisoner.
A night in irons down in the deepest hold
May give thee waking dreams thy morrow's chance
With the centurion hardly will dispel!"
Therewith he stalked off Shimei, stunned to dumb
And dizzy, with that deafening crack of doom.

Scarce less astonished and scarce less dismayed,
Stephen stood stricken on the staggering deck;
The roaring of the unregarded wind

Less noisy than the tumult of his thoughts.
The contrast of the horror of such crime
To the sweet peace and pleasure he but now
Was tasting in the hallowing afterglow
Of those bright moments with Eunice spent;
The frightful danger overpast for Paul;
The retribution, like a thunderbolt,
Fallen on Shimei; these, with remembrance mixed
Of what the chiliarch, wiser than he knew,
Said, touching Shimei with that letter charged
Of sinister import to Cæsarea,
"He carries his own sentence thither hence"—
'Unwritten sentence in his bosom, yea,
He carried, and he carries, wretched man!'
Thought Stephen. 'And what dire things in the world!
And God from heaven beholds and suffers all!
And what will be the end, if ever end,
Of all this tale of wickedness with woe
Drawn out from age to age, through clime and clime!'

Such thoughts on thoughts held Stephen hanging there

Unnoted minutes, till the dash of rain
In great drops threatening deluge smote his face
Like hailstones, and awoke him to the world.
At the same moment, Paul — who had not dreamed
Of the swift, muffled, darkling tragedy
Of plot and peril, shame and crime and doom,
Just acted nigh him in that theater,
And microcosm afloat of the wide world —
Broke up the long lull of his reverie
Above the running waters, heard, scarce seen,
Beneath him, by the hasting vessel's side —
As if a symbol of the mystery
Of things, an-hungered to devour all thought! —
And turned to shroud him from the weather wild.
The uncle and the nephew met, but spoke
Only a peace and farewell for the night;
Stephen not finding in his heart to break
To Paul the ill good news of what had passed.

With the rain falling, soon the wind was laid,
Planed was the sea, and cleansed of cloud the sky.
Bright the stars looked innumerably down
On the ship smoothly sped her prosperous way.

BOOK VIII.

SHIMEI BEFORE JULIUS.

The centurion Julius, having in charge the prisoners on board including Paul, examines Shimei, accused of his crime by the sentinel whom the crafty Hebrew had sought to bribe. Shimei makes a desperate effort to clear himself by bringing a countercharge against Paul of the same murderous attempt through bribe upon his, Shimei's, life. Almost on the point of succeeding, he is confronted first with Felix, then with Stephen, last with Paul—to his complete undoing.

SHIMEI BEFORE JULIUS.

The waking dreams of Shimei, in his chains
And darkness, were not altogether those
Foreshadowed by the soldier bitterly
To him — dreams of foreboding and despair
Only; that Roman had not learned that Jew.
The touch and prick of uttermost dismay
Stung him to one more struggle for himself.
Ere Julius, with the morning, had him forth
To inquest from his dungeon, that quick brain
Had ripe and ready, conjured up in thought,
For self-defense, with snare involved for Paul,
A desperate last compacture of deceit;
Desperate, yet deftly woven, and staggering,
Till the contriver was now quite undone,
Confronted with ascendant truth and power.

"What sayest thou, Jew," with challenge lowering stern,
Asked the centurion of his prisoner,
"In answer to the charge against thee laid?"
"What say?" with shrug of shoulder Shimei said;

"Why, that thy soldier was too strong for me,
And haled me and bestowed me as he would,
While at his leisure then his tale he told,
Forestalling mine, to prepossess thine ear.
I come too late; for I should speak in vain."
"Worse than in vain such words as those thou speakest.
Out on thine insolence, thou Hebrew dog!"
Savagely the centurion said. "'Too late'!
'Too late'! Know, Jew, too late it never is,
Where Roman justice undertakes, for one
Accused of crime to answer for himself.
True judge's ear cannot be 'prepossessed.'
Even now, deserving, as thou art, to be
Buffeted, rather than aught further heard,
Speak on and say thy say; but give good heed
Thou curb thy tongue from insolence and lies."

"From lying I shall have no need my tongue
To guard," said Shimei; "but from insolence —
Beseech thy grace, a plain blunt man am I,
Will it be insolence, if I inquire
What is the crime that I am charged withal?"
Curtly the Roman said: "Attempt to bribe

A soldier, and a Roman soldier he,
To break his oath and be a murderer."
"No stint of generous measure to the charge,"
Said Shimei; "yet I ought not to complain,
I, who a charge of ampler measure would
Myself have brought (as well as he knew who now,
And for that very cause, accuses me)
Had I been first; and first I should have been,
But for duress, and also this he knew,
Thence the duress — outrageous act from *him*,
Lese-majesty committed against thee! —
I say, had I beforehand been with him
To gain thine ear and a foul plot disclose."

The soldier stood in stupid blank amaze,
With silence by his discipline enforced,
To hear this frontless impudence of fraud.
He so much looked the guilt in slant implied
By Shimei, that no marvel Julius glanced
From one to the other of the two, perplexed,
Each the accuser and accused of each.
His soldier was a trusty man supposed;
The Jew came clouded and suspect as false:
But always it was possible repute

Accredited a man, or blamed, amiss.
"Thou riddlest like an oracle: be plain
And outright," so to Shimei Julius spoke.
"Thou hast vaguely shadowed some worse shape
of crime
Thou couldst reveal than that which seems revealed,
Accused to thee. What could be worse misdeed
Than breach attempted of a soldier's faith
To purchase murder?" "Breach accomplished,"
said
Shimei, "were worse; and, in a just assay,
Worse to attaint the honor of a man
Upright and good and true, and of him make
A criminal worthy of death, and doomed
As such to die: yea, a far darker crime
Than were purveyal of the needed stroke
To end a little earlier some base life,
Forfeit at any rate by guilt, and fain
Itself to court such refuge from despair.
Still more were worse the crime whereof I speak,
Let the man so attainted in his truth
Be one that moment bearing office grave
As an accuser and a witness sworn
Against such very criminal himself.

Then is the crime no longer merely crime
Against the single man however just,
But crime against justice itself and law,
And even against the outraged human race."

There was a stumbling incongruity—
Blasphemous, had it been less whimsical,
Whimsical, had it been less blasphemous—
Between the man himself and what he said.
His words were noble, or had noble been
But that the ignoble man who uttered them
Gainsaid them with the whole of what he was.

The soldier more and more astounded stood,
Or cowered, say rather, underneath the frown
Beetling and imminent of falsehood such,
Mountainous high, and like a mountain set
Immovable. (Immovable it seemed,
But at its heart with fear was tremulous,
And, to the proper breath, would presently
Melt, like cloud-mountain massed of misty stone
To the wind's touch.) As in a nightmare, he
Could no least gesture move to give the lie,
Browbeaten half to disbelieve himself.

Julius, nonplussed to see his soldier's air
Almost confessing judgment on himself,
Skeptic, yet therewithal impressed despite,
Imposed on even, by a mock-majesty,
The specious counterfeit of virtue wroth
But, though wroth, calm in conscious innocence,
Couched in the lofty words of Shimei,
While by his aspect blatantly belied —
Julius, thus wondering, curious, frowned and said:
"Cease from preamble, and forth with thy charge!
No further swelling phrases, large and vague;
But facts — or fictions — in plain terms and few."

Audience at length prepared, so Shimei deemed,
His story, well before prepared, he told:
"I lingered late last night upon the deck:
Slow pacing up and down for exercise,
I strict bethought me how I best might quit
The serious task committed to my hands
Of seeking sentence on a criminal
There at the fountain and prime spring of law
And justice, that august tribunal last,
The imperial seat at Rome. While I thus mused,
The Providence that, dark sometimes and slow,

As to us seems, does after all pursue
The flying footsteps of foul crime with scourge,
Or human vengeance help to overtake,
Showed me a light, which, alas, quickly then
By envious evil powers in turn was quenched.
For it so fell that in the exceeding dark,
Unseen, I overheard the prisoner Paul
Broach a new plot of bribery and wrong.
He promised to the soldier keeping him
Large money — earnest offered, and received,
I plainly heard it clink from hand to hand."
The soldier winced beneath the meaning glance
Shot at himself wherewith the subtile Jew
Spoke these last words; winced, and sore wished,
too late,
That, as he first had purposed, he had shown
In proof to the centurion Shimei's gold
Shoved for a bribe into his hand, but here
Adroitly turned to use against himself.
What if his captain, prompted by such hint,
Should now demand to see that dastard gold!
He had been silent touching it because
His mere possession of it would, he felt,
Look too much like his paltering with a price;

But, after Shimei's words, to have it found
Upon him! With such disconcerting thoughts,
The soldier listened like a criminal,
As Shimei with calm iteration said: —
"Thus would Paul buy his keeper to forswear
Against the one man he most feared, myself,
That I had sought to bribe a soldier's faith,
Bargaining with him to fling overboard
His prisoner and so rid him from the world.
'Thou sawest,' Paul told the soldier, 'how at Sidon
An ample sum was put into his hands
By wealthy friends there': he all this now pledged
To be his keeper's, no denary short,
If but he would traduce me thus, and so
Both break the damning power I else could wield
Against him, and, besides, my life destroy.
Thy soldier yielded: grievous wrong indeed,
Yet him I can forgive, for less as bribed
He faltered, than as overcome he fell.
Paul is the master of an evil art
To make his subject firmly hold for true
What, free from sorcery, he would know was false.
He, in the very act and article
Of sketching what his victim was on me

To father, the illusion could in him
Produce of hearing his own words from me.
A trick Paul has of vocal mimicry —
Sleight of longiloquence, whereby he throws
To distance, as may like, his uttered words,
To make them seem another's, not his own —
Aided him here; I hardly knew, myself,
Hearing him speak, but that the voice was mine.
Thus I account for it, that, without blame
So much to him himself, he being deceived,
This worthy soldier, whom I never wronged,
Doubtless an honest fellow in the main,
Should in effect malign me so to thee.

"In my simplicity, and in my faith
Undoubting that, confronted fair with truth,
Falsehood must needs take on its proper shape,
Then shrivel, ashamed to be at all, I sprang
Suddenly up, discovered to the pair.
I never dreamed but they would at my feet
Fall, and for mercy sue; which Shimei —
Soft-hearted ever for another, where
Only himself is wronged, however hard
He steel his heart where stake is public good —

Had doubtless weakly granted out of hand.
But, to my wonder, and, I own, dismay —
This for the moment, but that weakness passed —
At a quick sign from Paul, the soldier seized
Me and consigned to dungeon for the night.
What followed more on deck, I can but guess.
I doubt not Paul completed work begun
In this poor soldier's mind, and fixed his faith
That all had happened as he made report.
I pray thee judge his error lightly; he
Was of another's will, against his own,
Possessed, loth pervert of a power malign."

The soldier, hearing, was now witched indeed.
Partly his sense of flaw in rectitude —
Then suffered when he paltered with the bribe
Proffered by Shimei — shook him; and partly he
Descried a shift of refuge for himself
From dreaded blame at his centurion's hands —
Should Julius, as looked likely more and more,
At length accept the Hebrew's tale for true —
In letting it appear that Paul in fact
Had wrought upon him so as Shimei said,
To cheat him into honest misbelief.

This was the deeply calculated hope
Wherein that glozer, plotting as he went
With versatile adjustment to his need —
Need shifting, point by point, from phase to phase —
Provided for the soldier his escape
From the necessity of holding fast,
In self-defence, to his first testimony.
Thus, if all prospered, Shimei, yea, might yet
Save to himself the future chance to use
This soldier, more amenable to use.

Paul's keeper, thus prepared to falter, heard
Ambiguous challenge from the officer:
"What sayest thou, soldier? Wast beside thyself?
Dazed, hast thou then denounced the innocent man?"
Whereto ambiguous answer thus he framed:
"If I have done so, it was in excess
And haste of zeal to do a soldier's duty,
Misapprehended under wicked spell."
"Thou art not sure? A witness should be sure;
More, be he one denouncing deeds essayed
Worthy of death; most, if besides he add
An office of the executioner."
Thus the centurion to his soldier spoke,

Who answered, shuffling: "If my senses were
Rightly my own last night, I told thee true;
But if I was usurped by sorcery
To see and hear amiss — why, who can say?"

"Go find lord Felix, and, due worship paid,
Pray him come hither for a need that waits,"
So Julius made his soldier messenger.
"Grieving to trouble thee so far," he next
To Felix, soon appearing, said: "I sent
To ask thee of the Jew in presence here.
Knowest thou aught of him that might resolve
A doubt how much he be to trust for true?"
Shimei shrank visibly, while Felix, glad
To vent his hatred of the pander, spoke:
"As many as his words, so many lies;
Trust him thou mayest — to never speak the truth."
Wherewith the haughty freedman on his heel
Turned, as disdaining to use tongue or ear
Further in such a cause, and disappeared.
Julius in silence looked a questioning pause
At Shimei, who risked parrying answer, thus:
"Lord Felix is a disappointed man,
Who, if so soured, is gently to be judged.

Yet were it better he had stooped to speak
By instance, named occasion, wherein I
Had seemed to fail matching my words with deeds.
I own I sought to serve him in his need;
And if, forsooth, when he his hold on power
Felt slipping from his hands, I undertook
Freely, in succor of his fainting mind,
Somewhat beyond my strength to bring to pass,
In reconcilement of my countrymen
Against his sway unwontedly aggrieved —
Why, I am sorry; but failed promises,
Made in good faith, should not be reckoned lies."

There seemed to the centurion measure enough
Of reason in what Shimei so inferred,
If truly he inferred, to leave the doubt
Still unresolved with which he was perplexed.

While the diversion of the incident
With Felix, and of Shimei's parrying, passed,
The soldier, so released to cast about
At leisure, thought of Stephen standing up,
In that so Sphinx-like silence, startlingly,
Beside him, in the darkness on the deck,
At just the fatal point of his own poise

For the returnless plunge in the abyss;
That Hebrew youth would doubtless testify
To Shimei's damning; — to his own as well?
That were to think of! What would Stephen say?
Must it not cloud his own clear truth and faith,
To have it told how he abode so long
A hearkener to temptation; how he took
Gold as for bribe, and greedy seemed of more?
Why had he not been first to speak of that?
Wisest it looked to him not to invoke
A witness of so much uncertain power
To bring his own behavior into doubt.
And Shimei showed such master of his part,
Equal to shifting all appearances
This way or that, as best would serve himself,
Promised so fair to make his side prevail,
Were it not well to choose the chance with *him?*
The soldier fixed to stake on Stephen naught.

Shimei meantime had otherwise bethought
Himself of Stephen — fearing, yet with hope
Prevailing over fear: hardly would he,
The soldier, risk to call such witness in.

Those twain diversely so with the same thought

Secretly busy, the centurion —
Whether by some unconscious sympathy
His mind drawn into current following theirs,
Like idle sea-drift in the wake of ships —
Startled them both alike with his next word:
"That Hebrew lad, Stephen they call him, go
Fetch him; say, 'Come with me,' and no word more."
This to the soldier, who soon brought the youth.
"Some kin thou to the prisoner Paul, I think?"
Said the centurion. "Sister's son," said he.
"I had thee well reported of, my lad;
Belie not thy good fame, but answer true,"
Julius to Stephen spoke, adjuring him.
"Knowest thou aught, of thine own eye or ear,
How Paul thy kinsman was bestead last night?"

Now Stephen had not yet to Paul declared
Aught of the strange disclosures of the night.
Seeing here the plotter of that nameless deed
Demoniac, in the part of one accused,
Witnessed against with damning testimony,
The soldier's, all-sufficing for his doom,
Before a judge as Roman sure to be
Swift in his sentence upon such a crime —

Prompt in his secret mind Stephen resolved,
As likeliest best to please his kinsman Paul,
Not to go further than compelled, to add
Superfluous proof against the wretched man.

Sincerely wretched now indeed once more
Shimei appeared; effrontery of fraud
And his vain confidence of hope forlorn
Abashed in him, intolerably rebuked —
Not more by this access of evidence
(Unlooked for, since that muzzle to his mouth
Had so well served to hold the soldier mute
From mention of the Hebrew lad) — not more
Abashed thus and rebuked, than by the mere
Aspect of the clear innocence and truth
And virtue, honor and high mind, in fair
And noble person there embodied seen
In Stephen beamy with his taintless youth.
Was it some promise of retrieving yet
Possible for this soul, so lost to good,
That, broken from that festive confidence
Once his in the omnipotence of fraud
To answer all his ends, he thus should feel
Pain in the neighborhood of nobleness?

Unconsciously so working, like a wand
Wielded that cancels a magician's spell,
To shame back wretched Shimei to himself,
Nor ever guessing, in his guileless mind,
Of possible other posture to affairs
Than full exposure of the criminal
Already reached, no need of word from him —
Stephen to Julius frugally replied:
"Paul's case was happy, sir, if this thou meanest,
How fared he in the hap which him befell;"
Then, conscious of a look not satisfied
In Julius, added: "If instead thou meanest
What hap was threatened him but came to naught,
Then I shall need to answer otherwise."
"This I would learn," said Julius, "dost thou know,
Of certain knowledge, thine own eye or ear,
Where Paul was, and what doing, through the hours
Of last night's darkness? How was he bestead?
That tell me, if thou knowest, naught else but that.
Fact, first; thereafter, fancy — if at all."

A little puzzled, but withal relieved,
Not to be witness against Shimei,
"It happened," Stephen said, "that as the dark

Drew on, Paul with his sister Rachel talked,
They two apart; but nigh at hand I sat,
With others, on the deck. As the night waxed,
With darkness from the still-withdrawing sun,
And then from clouds that blotted out the stars,
Almost all went to covert one by one;
But Paul abode, and I abode with him.
Yet were we from each other separate,
And Paul perhaps knew not that I was nigh;
But I lay watching him and nursed my thoughts.
At first he paced, as musing, up and down,
Then, still alone, and still as musing, leaned,
In absent long oblivion of himself,
Over the vessel's side — into the sea
Gazing, like one who read a mystic book.
This and naught else he did, until a dash
Of rain-drops shredded from the tempest broke
His reverie; and then both he and I,
Meeting a moment but to say good-night,
Housed us for the forgetfulness of sleep."

"Thou hast told me all? Communication none
Between Paul and this soldier keeping him?"
Straitly of Stephen the centurion asked,

With eye askance on Shimei shrinking there.
"With no one," Stephen answered, "spake Paul
word,
After that converse with his sister, till
I met him face to face and changed good night."

"Thou hadst some fancy other than thy fact,"
Said Julius now to Stephen, "some surmise
As seemed concerning danger threatened Paul"—
But Shimei dimmed so visibly to worse
Confession of dismay in countenance,
That Julius checked the challenge on his lips,
And, turning, said to Shimei: "Need we more?
Or art unmasked to thy contentment, Jew?
Shall I bid hither Paul, forsooth, and let
Thee face the uncle, since the nephew so,
Simply to see, thy gullet fills with gall,
And twists thy wizened features all awry?
Aye, for meseems it were a happy thought,
Go, lad, and call thy kinsman hither straight.
Stay, hast thou seen him since last night's farewell?"
"Nay," answered Stephen. "Well!" the Roman
said;
"So tell him nothing now of what is here.

Say only, 'The centurion wishes thee';
Haste, bring him." Stephen soon returned with Paul,
Who wondered, knowing naught of all, to see
What the encounter was, for him prepared.

Not till now ever, since the fateful time
When, buoyant with the sense of his reprieve
Won for a season from the contact loathed
Of Shimei, Paul rode forth Damascus-ward,
Had they two in such mutual imminence met.
Paul looked at Shimei now, not with regard
That, like a bayonet fixed, thrust him aloof,
Or icily transpierced him pitiless;
But in a gentle pathos of surprise,
With sorrow yearning to be sympathy —
Reciprocal forgiveness interchanged
Between them, and all difference reconciled:
A melting heaven of cloudless April blue
Ready to weep suffusion of warm tears,
The aspect seemed of Paul on Shimei turned.
Good will, such wealth, expressed, must needs good will
Responsive find, or, failing that, create!

But Shimei did not take the look benign
Of Paul, to feel its vernal power; downcast
His eyes he dropped and missed the virtue shed—
Missed, yet not so as not some gracious force,
Ungraciously, ill knowing, to admit.

"Thou knowest this fellow-countryman of thine?"
To the apostle speaking, Julius said.
"I know him, yea," said Paul. "And knowest perhaps,"
Said Julius, further sounding, "what the chance
Of mischief from him thou hast late escaped?"
"Nay, but not yet have I, I trow," Paul said,
"Escaped the evil he fain would bring on me.
He hates me, and, if but he could, he would
Quite rid me from the world; that know I well.
"But knowest thou," the centurion pressed, "how he
Plotted last night to have thee overboard
To wrestle, swimming, with the swirling sea?"
"Nay," Paul said, "nay; I knew not that." He spoke
Without surprise couched in his tone; far less,
Horror or fear expressed in look or act;
No sidelong stab at Shimei from his eye;

Only some sadness, with the patience, dashed
The weariness with which he spoke. "And yet —
And yet," he added, half as if he would
Extenuate what he could, "it is his way,
The natural way in which he works his will.
His will I well can understand, though not,
Not so, his way. From that I was averse
Ever, but once I had myself his will."
"Thou canst not mean his will to get Paul slain,"
Baffled, the Roman said. "Nay, but his will
To persecute and utterly to destroy,"
Said Paul, "the Name, and all that own the Name,
Of my Lord Jesus Christ from off the earth."

At that Name, thus with loyal love confessed,
The hoarded hatred, deep in Shimei's heart,
Toward Jesus, which so long had fed and fired
The embers of the hatred his for Paul,
Stirred angrily; it almost overcame
The cringing craven personal fear in him.
Though he indeed spoke not, uttered no sound,
There passed upon his visage and his port
A change, from abject while malign, to look
Malign more, and less abject, fierce and fell.

It was a strange transfiguration wrought,
An horrible redemption thus achieved —
From what before one only could despise
To what one now, forsooth, might reprobate!
The quite-collapsed late liar and poltroon
Rallied to a resistant attitude,
Which stiffened and grew hard like adamant,
While further Julius thus his wiles exposed:
"The 'way' of this thy fellow-countryman,
O Paul, thou hast yet, I judge, in full to learn.
When, by the soldier whom he sought to bribe
For thy destruction, of his crime accused
To me, how, thinkest thou, he would purge himself?
Why, by persuading me that Paul, instead,
Had himself bought his keeper to forswear
Against *him*, Shimei, such foul plot to slay.
Hold I not well thou hadst something still to learn
Of the unsounded depths his 'way' seeks out?"

Julius said this with look on Shimei fixed,
Full of the scorn he felt, each moment more.
Like the skilled slinger toying with his stone
Swung round and round in air, full length of sway,
Through circles viewless swift, but in its pouch

Uneasy, at his leisure still delayed
For surer aim and fiercer flight at last,
And that, the while, the wielder may prolong
Both his delight of vengeance tasted so,
And his foe's fear accenting his delight;
Thus Julius, dallying, teased to wrath his scorn,
More threatening as in luxury of reserve
Suspended from the outbreak yet to fall.

The while the scornful Roman's wroth regard
Fixed as if caustic fangs upon the Jew,
The Jew, with stoic endurance, steeled himself
To take it without blenching. Full well felt
Through all his members was that branding look;
Though his eyes still were downward bent, as when
He dropped them to refuse Paul's sweet good will.
But suddenly now, he one first furtive glance
Lifting, as if unwillingly, to Paul,
Shimei takes on a violent change reverse.
A wave of abjectness swept over him
That drenched, that drowned, his evil hardihood
And wrecked him to a ruin of himself.

Julius who saw this change had also seen

Shimei's stolen glance at Paul; he himself now
Turned toward the apostle with inquiring eye.

What he saw seized him and usurped his mind —
His passion with a mightier passion quelled,
Or to another, higher, key transposed:
The wrathful scorn that had toward Shimei blazed
Became a rapt admiring awe of Paul.
For there Paul stood, the meek and lowly mien,
The sadness and the patience, not laid by,
But an unconscious air of majesty
Enduing him like a clear transpicuous veil,
Self-luminous so with cleansed indignant zeal
For God and truth and righteousness outraged,
That he was fair and fearful to behold.
God had made him a Sinai round whose top
A silent thunder boomed and lightnings played.
White holiness burned on his brow, a flame
The like whereof the Roman never saw
Glorifying and making terrible,
Beyond all fabled gods, the front of man.

The exceeding instance of this spectacle
It was, filling the place as if with beams,
Not of the day, but stronger than the day,

That had perforce drawn Shimei's eyes to see—
A moment, and no more. As seared with light
Fiercer than they could bear, again they fell.
Then all the man with saving terror shook
To hear Paul speak—in tones wherein no ire,
As for himself, entered, to ease the weight
With which the might of truth omnipotent
Pressed on its victim like the hand of God:
"Full of all subtlety and mischief! Thou
Child of the devil, as doer of his deeds!
Accurséd, if thou hadst but plotted death
Against me, death however horrible,
That I had found a light thing to forgive.
But to swear me suborner like thyself
Of perjury"— But the denouncer marked
How, under his denouncement, Shimei quailed:
He in mid launch the fulmination stayed.
His adversary victim's broken plight
Disarmed him, and a sad vicarious sense
Of what awaited such as Shimei
Hereafter, penetrated to his heart.
As shamed from his indignant passion, Paul
Instantly melted to a mood of tears.

This Shimei less could bear than he had borne
Those terrors of the Lord aflame in Paul.
The old man shaken with so many sharp
Vicissitudes of feeling, sharp and swift:—
Hope from despair, despair again from hope;
Then fresh hope from the ashes of despair;
That costly hardening of the heart with hate,
And steeling, to resistance, of the will;
Next, a soul-cleaving anguish of remorse,
New to him, mingled with forebodings new,
Menaces beckoning from the world to come;
These, with the unimagined tenderness
That now reached out and touched him in Paul's
tears—
The old man, plied and exercised thus, broke
Abruptly from the habit of a life,
Utterly broke, and suddenly was no more,
At least for one sweet moment of release,
The hard, the false, the bitter, the malign
Shimei of old—changed to a little child!
In both his quivering hands his face he hid,
And, all his strength consumed to scarcely stand,
Wept, with convulsion poured from head to foot,
But made no other sign, to this from Paul:

"As I forgive thee, lo, forgive thou me,
Shimei, my brother! And Christ us both forgive!"

The Roman wondering saw these things and heard,
Nor moved in speech or gesture, touched with awe.
But when now all was acted so, and seemed
There nothing was to follow more, he turned,
And, not ungently, though with firm command,
Said to the soldier: "Lead him hence away
To keeping; make his manacles secure.
Thou wilt not, I suppose, a second time,
Try ear or tongue in parley — never wise.
Thou hast lost somewhat in this adventure; see
Thou win it back with double heed henceforth."

So Shimei went remanded to his doom,
With Paul and Stephen pitying witnesses.

BOOK IX.

PAUL AND YOUNG STEPHEN.

In sequel of the tragic crime and doom that had just been witnessed by him in the case of Shimei, young Stephen is drawn to resume with his kinsman Paul the topic of the imprecatory psalms, which they had previously discussed on their night ride from Jerusalem toward Cæsarea. Paul gently lets his nephew unbosom all his heart, and, point by point, meets the young man's difficulties with senior counsel and instruction.

PAUL AND YOUNG STEPHEN.

The brilliant weather, with the sparkling sea
Blue under the blue heaven above it bowed,
There the great sun, his solitary state
Making his own pomp as it moved along
In that imperial progress through the skies,
The blithe wind blowing in the singing sails,
And the gay answer of the bounding bark,
On either hand bright glimpses of the shore—
All these things to enliven were not enough
For that day's need to Paul and those with him:
They could not rally to their customed cheer,
Serious, not sad, although light-hearted never.
The deed of Shimei and scarce less his doom
Still damped their spirits, so strung to sympathy,
Till sunny day wore on to starry night.

Then, Paul and Stephen by themselves apart
Resting, the younger to the elder said:
"Much, O mine uncle, have I pondered, since,
The deep things that I heard from thee, that night,
Already now so many months ago,

By thy side riding, thou by Lysias sent
(Safeguarded by his Romans from the Jews!)
To wear out thy duress at Cæsarea.
Thou wert then as now escaped from Shimei's
snare!
We spake, thou wilt remember, of those psalms
Which breathe, or seem to breathe, such breath
of hate.
I had recited one aloud to thee—
To myself rather, bold, for thee to hear—
Vent to the feeling fierce that in my breast
Boiled into tempest against Shimei.
Thou chidedst me with a most sweet rebuke
That drew the tumor all, out of my heart;
Thou taughtst me then that the good Spirit of God,
Who breathed the inspiration into men
To utter such dire words, seeming of hate,
Hated not any as I to hate had dared.
I understood thee that God only so
Revealed in forms of vivid human speech
The implacable resentment—but I pause,
Pause startled at the word I use; I would,
Could I, find other than such words as these,
'Resentment,' 'indignation,' 'hatred,' 'wrath,'

To speak my thought of holy God aflame
With infinite displacency at sin —
Once more! Another word I fain would shun!
For by some tether that I cannot break,
Bound, I revolve in the same circle still."

As if his speech were half soliloquy,
The youth let lapse his musing into mute,
Which not with word or sign would Paul invade.
Almost with admiration, with such joy
Of hope for Stephen, Paul remarked in him
The noble gains of knowledge he had made —
Wisdom say rather out of knowledge won —
In those two years at Cæsarea spent;
Years for the youth so rich in fruitful chance
Of converse with his elders, and of thought
Which in that quick young mind, for brooding apt
No less than apt for action, brought to full
Sweet ripeness all that he from other learned,
And touched it with a quality his own.
Paul could not but in measure feel himself
Given back to him reflected in the words
That he just now had heard from Stephen's lips;
Yet he therein felt too a surge of youth

And youth's unrest and eagerness and strife
And dauntless heart to assay the impossible
Which were all Stephen's. And he held his peace.

Presently Stephen took up voice again:
"Almost I thus resolve myself one doubt,
One question, that I thought to bring to thee.
God is not altogether such, I know,
As we are; yet are we too somewhat such
As He, for in God's image were we made.
And we perforce must know God, if at all,
Then by ourselves as patterned after Him.
So I suppose our best similitude
For what God feels — but 'feeling,' also that! —
How fast do these anthropomorphic walls
Enclose us still in all our thought of God! —
'Feeling' is but a parable flung forth
By us, bridge-builders on the hither side,
To tremble out a little way toward God,
Then flutter helpless down in the abyss,
The impassable abyss, of difference
Between created and Creator, us
And Him, the finite and the Infinite!
Forgive me, but I lose my way in words!"

And again Stephen broke his utterance off,
Faltering; like one who fording a full stream
Now in midcurrent finds his foothold fail,
And cannot in such deepened waters walk.

This time Paul reached the struggling youth a hand
With: "Thou hast not ill achieved in thine essay
To utter what is nigh unutterable.
But, Stephen, better bridge than any form
Of fancy, figure or similitude,
To human sense or reason possible
And capable of frame in human speech,
For spanning the great gulf immeasurable,
Unfathomable, nay, inconceivable,
(Gulf, otherwise than so, impassable,
Yet so, securely closed forevermore!)
The awful gulf of being and of thought,
Much more, of moral difference, since our fall,
That parts our kind from holy God Most High—
Yea, better bridge than any word of ours
Aspiring upward from beneath to God,
Is that Eternal Word of God Himself
To us, down-reaching hither from above,

Who, being God with God, was Man with man,
And Who, returning thither whence He came,
Carried our nature with Him into heaven,
And to the Ever-living joined us one.

"But rightly thou wert saying, my Stephen,
that we
Best can approach to put in speech of man
The ineffable regard of God toward sin,
If we impute to Him a spurning such
As we feel when we hate or loathe or scorn,
And wish to wreak in punishment our wrath.
But we must purge ourselves of self-regard,
Or we are sinful in abhorring sin;
And we attaint God with gross attribute
Imputed from what we through fall became.
An horrible profaneness, sure, it were,
The image first of God in us to foul,
And then that foulness back on God asperse,
Making Him hate with wicked human hate!"

The wide impersonal purport of Paul's words,
Not meant, he knew, in hidden hint to him,
Still, Stephen with his wise docile spirit took
Home to himself, and fell some moments mute,

Considering; then afresh his mind exposed:
"I feel, O kinsman most revered, how bold,
How froward, how perverse, it were in me,
First to lay hold on holy words of God
To use them, as I used that psalm that night,
Profanely for a vehicle of hate;
And then, convicted of my fault therein,
Turn round and blame the very words I used,
Or seem to blame them, as unmeet from God.
Yet I experience an obscure distress —
Is it of mind or heart? I scarce know which —
A sense of contradiction unresolved,
When, in the spirit of all-loving love,
Such as sometimes I seem to catch from thee,
I read or ponder those terrific psalms."

'Thou art tempted then perhaps," gently said
Paul,
Yet with some gentle irony implied,
"To doff the pupil's lowly attitude
In which thou hadst learned so much; as if indeed
Thou hadst learned enough to be a teacher now,
And even a teacher to thy Teacher, God?
Beware, my son, of these delusive thoughts;

Love also has its specious counterfeits—
Whence that deep word of the apostle John,
So frequent on his lips, his touchstone word—
More needed, as, to seeming, needed not—
To make us sure, when we suppose we love,
Whether we love in truth: 'Herein we know
That we God's children love, when we love God,
And His commandments do. For this is love
Indeed of God, to do His holy will!
A childlike humble spirit, the spirit of love,
Contented to believe and to obey!
The wiser that she seeks not to be wise,
She wins her wisdom by obedience.

"Does thy love puff thee up to challenge God
Whether He be consistent with Himself?
Suspect 'all-loving love' which moves to that!
Love puffs not up—right love, love which is awe
(As ever love inbreathed from Jesus is)—
To any pride of wisdom questioning God.
Some specious counterfeit it is of love,
Not love herself—who grows by meekness wise
To meekness more, and more obedient faith—
Not love, nay, Stephen, but other spirit than love

(Self-pity, self-indulgence, self-regard,
Some spirit fixing for the center self),
That sits in judgment on the ways of God
To find Him sometimes wise or sometimes not.
God was as wise when He inspired those psalms
As when in Christ he bade us ever love,
Love even our enemies and do them good.
Submit thyself to God, my Stephen, and be
Humble; for God resists the proud, but gives
Grace to the humble still and grace for grace—
Grace given already, ground for added grace.
Grow then in grace thus, and be meekly wise.
I have spoken divining what thy meaning was,
Perhaps amiss"—and Paul refrained from more.

But Stephen answered: "If such was my thought,
At least I did not know it to be such,
As thou hast thus divined it now for me.
Thither perhaps it tended—but that goal,
Shown in this light from thee, though far, I shun;
I would not be more wise than God, for God.
But is there then no contrariety
At all, no spirit discrepant, between

The frightful fulminations of those psalms
And the forgiving love of our Lord Christ?"
"None, Stephen," said Paul, "for none did Jesus know,
Who knew those psalms and never protest made
Against them, never softened their austere,
Their angry, aspect, never glozed their sense,
Never one least slant syllable let slip,
Hint as that *He* would not have spoken so,
Never with pregnant silence passed them by.
Nay, of those psalms one of the fiercest, He—
And this, then when His baptism into death,
His offering of Himself for sin, was nigh,
Those Feet already in the crimson flood!—
Most meek and lowly suffering Lamb of God,
Took to Himself to make it serve His need
In uttering the just horror of His soul
At such hate wreaked on Him without a cause.
'Pour out Thine indignation on them, Lord,
And let the fierceness of Thy wrath smite them!
To their iniquity iniquity
Add Thou'—such curse invokes this dreadful psalm—
'Let them be blotted from the book of life'!

From close beside these burning sentences,
These drops of Sodom-and-Gomorrah rain,
Out of the self-same psalm with them, our Lord,
Now nigh to suffer (saying to His own
He as in holy of holies with them shrined,
More heavenly things than ever even Himself
Till then had spoken) drew those words — sad words,
Stern words! — 'They hated Me without a cause.'
Love shrank not, nay, in Him, from holy hate!

"His spirit and the spirit of those psalms
Ever with one another dwelt at peace;
More than at peace, with one another one
Were they, the selfsame spirit both; as needs
Was, since the Spirit of all psalms was He.
Even thus, I have not to the full expressed
The will, with power, that in Christ Jesus wrought
To fulmine indignation against sin.
The psalms, those fiercest and most branding, fail
To match the fury of the Lamb of God
Poured out in words of woe on wickedness,
His own words, burning to the lowest hell —
Enraged eruption from the heart of love!
Most dreadful of things dreadful that! A fire,

My Stephen, which, as loth to kindle, so,
Once kindled, then will burn the deepest down!
Woe the most hopeless of surcease or change —
Mercy herself to malediction moved,
Love forced to speak in final words of hate!"

An energy of earnest in Paul's voice,
A tender earnest, full of love and fear,
Fear without dread, serene vicarious fear
(Yet faithful sympathy with God expressed)
The solemn somber of a lighted look
In him, reflected as from some unseen
Region where light was more than luminous,
Appalling, like the splendor of a cloud
Whence deep the thunder now begins to break —
These, with his words themselves infusing awe,
Made Stephen feel his heart in him stand still.
Both for meet reverence toward the reverend man
Who spake these things, and likewise to assure
Himself that he in nothing failed the full
Sense and effect of all that he had heard,
Stephen his hush awe-struck, of thought, prolonged.

Then, partly from a certain manliness
Innate in him, inalienably his,

Which, while of noble and ennobling awe
It made his spirit but more capable,
Yet kept him ever conscious of his worth,
And would not suffer that, with any thought
Quick in him and still seeming to him true
Or worthy to be questioned for its truth,
He should, howso abashed, abandon it —
Partly self-stayed so in a constant mind,
But more, supported by his perfect trust
Well-grounded in his kinsman's gentleness
And tact of understanding exquisite,
Stephen returned to press his quest once more:
"I must not seem insistent overmuch,
O thou my kinsman and my master dear,
To whom indeed I hearken as to one
Divinely guided to be guide to men;
But a desire to know not yet allayed,
Perhaps I ought to own, some haunting doubt,
Prompts me to ask one question more of thee.

"I know the psalms whereof we speak were meant,
As were their fellow psalms, each, not to breathe
The individual feeling of one soul
Whether himself the writer or whoso

Might take it for his own, but to be used
By the great congregation joining voice
In symphony or in antiphony
Of choral worship, with stringed instruments
Adding their help, and instruments of wind:
So, most unmeet it were if private grudge
Of any whomsoever, high or low,
Should mix its base alloy with the fine gold
Of prayer and praise stored in our holy psalms
For pure oblation from all holy hearts
To Him, the Ever-living Holy God.
The wicked and the enemy therein
Accurséd so from good to every bane
And ill here and hereafter following them
And hunting down their issue to the end
Of endless generations of their like —
These, I can understand, were public foes,
Not private, adversary heathen tribes
That hated us because they hated God
Who chose us for His own peculiar race,
And swayed us weapon in His dread right hand
To execute His judgment on His foes,
His foes, not ours, or only ours as His —
'Them that hate Thee do not I hate, O God?'

The righteous execration bursting forth,
An outcry irrepressible of zeal,
Through all the cycle of those fearful psalms,
Not from a heart of virulence toward men,
But from a love, consuming self, for God.
Such, I can understand, the purport was
Wherein Himself, the Holy Ghost of God,
Inspired those psalms and willed them to be sung.
But, O my master, tell me, did not yet
Some too importunate spirit not thus pure,
Of outright sheer malevolence some trace,
Escape of private malice uncontrolled,
Hatred toward man that was not love for God,
On his part who was chosen God's oracle
To such high end and hard, enter the strain
He chanted, here or there, to jar the tune
And of his music make a dissonance?"

Stephen, as one who had with resolute
Exertion of an overcoming will
Discharged his heart with speech, let come what might,
Rested; the tension of his purpose still
Persisting to refuse himself recoil.

Feeling his nephew's girded attitude,
Nowise resistant, though recessive not,
Braced to keep staunch his standing where he stood,
Paul would not overbear it with sheer strength;
Choosing, with just insinuation wise,
To ease it through concession yielded him.
He said: "My Stephen has pondered deep these things,
And to result of truth well worth his pains.
Thou hast profited, my son, perhaps beyond
Thine own thought of thy profiting, in sweet
Acquist of wisdom from the mind of Christ.
Fair change, change fair and great, in thee since when
Thou cursedst Shimei in that bitter psalm! —
Bitter from thee who saidst it bitterly.
Behold, thou art fain, forsooth, to find those words,
Those same words now which then thou likedst well
Rolling them under thy tongue a morsel sweet,
Almost too human for at all divine.
Was there not in them, this thou askest me,
Expression intermixed of wicked hate,
His whose the occasion was to write the psalm?
The turns and phrases of the speech wherein

The psalmist here or there breathes out his soul
In malediction, have such force to thee,
Importing that his spirit let escape
A passion of his own not purified
Amid the pressure and the stress of zeal
Inspired from God against unrighteousness.

"Well, Stephen, the entrusted word of God
To men is ours through men and, men being such,
Why, needs we have the priceless treasure stored,
Stored and conveyed, in vessels framed of clay.
No perfect men are found, were ever found:
God's inspiration does not change men such.
His wisdom is to make of men unwise,
Of men, too, fallen far short of holiness,
Imperfect organs of His perfect will.
Adhesion hence of imperfection, man's,
Fast to the letter of the Scripture clings;
But it makes part of His perfection, God's,
Who knows us, and from His celestial height
Benignly earthward deigning condescends.
In terms of our imperfect, flawed with sin
Even, the Divine inworking wisdom loves
To teach us noble lessons of Himself,

Ennobling us to ever nobler views
Of what He is, so shadowed forth to us.

"'Sin,' that word 'sin,' so weighted as we know
With sense, beyond communication deep,
Of evil, of wrong, of outrage, of offence
Toward God, and toward ourselves of injury
Irreparable and growing ever great
And greater to immortal suicide
Wreaked with incredible madness on the soul —
What is that word in the light shallow speech
Of pagan Greek? What but a word to mean,
As if of purpose to make naught the blame,
Simply the casual missing of a mark?
Venial, forsooth, merely an aim not hit —
The aim right, but the arrow flying wide!
Into such matrix, shallower as would seem
Than could be made capacious of such sense,
God must devise to pour His thought of sin!
But how the thought has deepened since its mould,
Still vain to match the sinfulness of sin!
Humbleness — what a virtue, what a grace
Say rather, yet in all the Greek no word
To name it, till God's wisdom rectified

A word that erst imported what was base,
Mean, sordid, dastard, unuplifted, vile
In spirit, pusillanimous, to name
The lowly temper, best beloved in man
By God, the heavenly temper of His Son!
The thought at last is master of its mould,
Though mould is needful for the plastic thought.

"In our imagination of The True,
We climb as by a ladder, round by round,
Slowly toward Him, the Inaccessible,
Who dwells in a seclusion and remove
Of glory unapproachable, and light
That makes a blinding darkness round His throne.
He stoops and finds and touches us abased
So far beneath Him where we grovelling lie;
Nay, He lays hold of us and lifts us up;
With cords, so it is written, of a man
He draws us, blesséd God!—with bands of love,
Of love, the mightiest of His heavenly powers!
O, the depth fathomless, the starry height,
The breadth, the length immeasurably large,
Both of the wisdom and the knowledge, God's!
Because, forsooth, we have some few steps climbed,

Shall we, proud, spurn from underneath our feet
The ladder that uplifted us so far,
That might have raised us yet the full ascent?
That ladder rests on earth to reach to heaven:
Let us go on forever climbing higher,
But not forget the dark hole of the pit
Out of which we were digged, nor, more, contemn
The way of wisdom thither reaching down
And thence aspiring to the topmost heaven;
Whereby our race may (so we stumble not
Through pride, or like Jeshurun waxen fat
Kick) reascend at length to whence we fell —
Nay, higher, and far above all height the highest,
To Him, with Him, exalted to His right,
To Him, with Him, in Him, Lord Christ, Who rose
For us in mighty triumph from His grave,
Then reascended where He was before,
Ere the world was, God with His Father God,
But still for us; and, still for us, sat down
Forever, in His Filial Godhead Man,
Assessor with His Father on His throne,
Inheriting the Name o'er every name
Ascendant, King of kings and Lord of lords,

And us assuming with Himself to reign!
Amen! And hallelujah! And amen!"

As one might watch an eagle in his flight
That soared to viewless in the blinding sun;
As one might hearken while from higher and higher
A lark poured back his singing on the ground,
So Stephen gazed, listening, with ecstatic mind.

"Transported with delight I hear thee speak
Thus, O my reverend master, for with awe,
Which is delight, the deepest that I know"—
Thus at length Stephen spoke, easing his mind
A little, with its fulness overfraught.
"Doxology outbreaking from thy lips
Becomes them so! The rapture of thy praise
Is as the waving of a mighty wing
Beside me that is able to upbear
Me also thither whither it will soar.
I am caught in its motion and I mount
Unmeasured heights as to the heaven of heavens.
Let me join voice with thee and say, 'Amen!'
Not least I love when least I understand
Often thy high discourse. Eluding me

It leads me yet and tempts me after thee,
Tempts and enables, and, above myself,
I find myself equalled to the impossible!
But then when afterward I sink returned
To what I was — no longer wing not mine
To lift me with its great auxiliar sweep
Upward — I grope and stumble on the ground.

"Bear with me that I need to ask such things,
But tell me yet, O thou who knowest, tell me,
Am I then right, and is it, as thou seemedst
To say but saidst not, veering from the mark
When now almost upon it, so I thought,
Who waited watching — did the psalmist old
Commingle sometimes an alloy of base
Unpurified affection with his clear
All-holy inspiration breathed from God,
Lading his language with a sense unmeet,
Personal spite, his own, for God's pure ire?
Forgive me that I need to ask such things."

"Thou dost not need to ask such things, my son,"
Paul with a grave severity replied.
"To ask them is to ask me that I judge
A fellow-servant. What am I to judge

The servant of another, I who am
Servant myself with him of the same Lord?
I will not judge my neighbor; nay, myself,
Mine own self even, I judge not; One is Judge,
He who the Master is, not I that serve.
If so be, the inspired, not sanctified,
Mere man, entrusted with the word of God —
Our human fellow in infirmity,
Remember, of like passions with ourselves —
Indeed in those old days wherein he wrote,
His enemies being the enemies of the Lord,
And speaking he as voice at once of God
And of God's chosen, His ministers to destroy
Those wicked — if so be such man, so placed,
Half conscious, half unconscious, oracle
Of utterance not his own, did in some part
That utterance make his own, profaning it,
To be his vehicle for sense not meant
By the august Supreme Inspiring Will —
Whether in truth he did, be God the judge,
Not thou, my son, nor I, but if he did —
Why, Stephen, then that psalmist — with more plea
Than thou for lenient judgment on the sin,
Thine the full light, and only twilight his,

With Christ our Sun unrisen — the selfsame fault
As thou, committed. Be both thou and he
Forgiven of Him with Whom forgiveness is —
With Whom alone, that so He may be feared!"

Abashed, rebuked, the youth in silence stood,
Musing; but what he mused divining, Paul,
With gently reassuring speech resumed,
Soon to the things unspoken in the heart
Of Stephen spoke and said: "Abidest still
Unsatisfied that anything from God,
Though even through man, should less than perfect be,
Or anywise other than incapable,
Than utterly intolerant, of abuse
To purposes profane? Consider this —
And lay thy hand upon thy mouth, nay, put
Thou mouth into the dust, before the Lord —
That God Most High hath willed it thus to be,
That thus Christ found it and pronounced it good.
Who are we, Stephen, to be more wise than God,
Who, to be holier than His Holy Son?"

"Amen! Amen! I needs must say, Amen!"
In anguish of bewilderment the youth

Cried out, almost with sobs of passionate
Submission, from rebellion passionate
Hardly to be distinguished; "yea, to God
From man, ever amen, only amen,
No other answer possible to Him!—
Who is the potter, in Whose hands the clay
Are we, helpless and choiceless, to be formed
And fashioned into vessels at His will!"

"Helpless, yea, Stephen," Paul said, "but choiceless not;
We choose, nay, even, we cannot choose but choose—
The choice our freedom, our necessity:
Free how to choose, we are to choose compelled.
We choose with God, or else against Him choose.
Which wilt thou, Stephen? Thou! With Him or against?"

A struggle of submission shuddered down
To quiet in the bosom of the youth—
Strange contrast to the unperturbed repose,
With rapture, of obedience, that meantime,
And ever, safe within the heart of Paul
Breathed as might breathe an infant folded fast
To slumber in its mother's cradling arms!

So had Paul learned to let the peace of Christ
Rule in his heart, a fixed perpetual calm,
Like the deep sleep of ocean at his core
Of waters underneath the planes of storm.
And Stephen answered: "Oh, with God, with God!
And blesséd be His name that thus I choose!"
"Yea, verily," Paul said, "for He sole it is
Who worketh in us, both to will and work
For the good pleasure of His holy will.
As thou this fashion of obedience
Obediently acceptest at His gift,
So growest thou faithful mirror to reflect
Clear to thyself, and just, the thought of God.
Thus thou mayst hope to learn somewhat of true,
Of high and deep and broad, concerning Him,
Him and His ways inscrutable with us —
Of thy self emptied, for more room to be
From God henceforth with all His fulness filled!

"This at least learn thou now, how greatly wise
Was God, by that which was in us the lowest
To take us and uplift us higher and higher
Until those very passions, hate and wrath,
Which erst seemed right to us, as they were dear,

Become, to our changed eyes — eyes, though thus
changed,
Nay, as thus changed, sore tempted to be proud —
Become forsooth unworthy symbols even
To shadow God's displeasure against sin.
To generation generation linked
In living long succession from the first,
To nation nation joined, one fellowship
Of man, through clime and clime, from sea to sea —
Thus has by slow degrees our human kind
Been brought from what we were to what we are.
Thus and no otherwise the chosen race
Was fitted to provide a welcoming home,
Such welcoming home! on earth for Him from
heaven —
The only people of all peoples we
Among whom God could be Immanuel
And be in any measure understood,
Confounded not as of their idol tribes.
And we — *we* did not understand Him so
But that we hissed Him to be crucified!
So little were we ready, and even at last,
For the sun shining in His proper strength!
After slow-brightening twilight ages long

To fit our blinking vision for the day,
The glorious sun arising blinded us
And maddened! We smote at him in his sphere,
Loving our darkness rather than that light!"

Therewith, as for the moment lapsed and lost
In backward contemplation, with amaze
And shame and grief and joy and love and awe
And thanks commingling in one surge of thought
At what he thus in sudden transport saw,
Paul into silence passed, which his rapt look
Made vocal and more eloquent than voice.
This Stephen reverenced, but at last he said:
"O thou my teacher in the things of God,
That riddle of wisdom in divine decree
Whereof thou spakest, the linking in one chain
Together, one fast bond and consequence,
Of all the generations of mankind
And all their races for a common lot
Of evil or good, yet speak, I pray, thereof,
To make me understand it if I may.
Why should Jehovah on the children wreak
The wages of the fathers' wickedness?
Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Yea, doubtless, yea; but *that*—how is that right?"
"His way is in the sea," said Paul, "His path
In the great waters! Would we follow Him,
His footsteps are not known! Blesséd be God!"

"Amen! Amen! Forevermore amen!"
As one who bound himself with sacrament,
Assenting without interrupting said
Stephen, and Paul went on: "Yet this note thou:
It is not on the children, such by blood,
That God will visit the iniquity
Of fathers: the children must be such in choice
As well, in spirit, must be the fathers' like—
And there another mystery! (for deep
Sinks endless under deep, to who would sound
The bottomless abyss of God's decree)—
The children ever, prave and prone, incline
To follow where the fathers lead the way;
The children, yea, must do the fathers' deeds,
Then only share the fathers' punishment.
This, by that prophet mouth, Ezekiel, God
Taught with expostulation and appeal
Pathetically eloquent of love
With longing in our Heavenly Father's heart

That not one human creature of His hand
Be lost, but all, but all, turn and be saved.

"Nay, even from Sinai's touched and smoking top
Was the same sense of grace to men revealed.
For what said that commandment threatening wrath
Divine, in sequel of ancestral sin,
To light on generations yet to be?
Said it not, 'On the children?' Yea, but heed,
It hasted to supply in pregnant words
Description of the children thus accursed:
'On the third generation and the fourth
Of them that hate Jehovah'—wicked seed
Of wicked sires, and therefore with them well
Deserving to partake one punishment.
And now consider what stands written next.
Deterrent menace done, to fend from sin,
Allurement then, how large! to righteousness.
If first the warning filled a mighty bound,
All bound the grace succeeding overflowed.
O, limitless outpouring from a full,
An overfull, an aching, heart of love
In God our Father! Mercy to be shown,
Not to two generations or to three,

But to a thousand generations, drawn,
A bright succession, to unending date,
Of them — that 'fear and worship'? nay — that love
God for their Father and His will observe!

"But, Stephen, enough for now of such discourse.
My mind is helpless absent while we talk,
My heart being heavy with desire and prayer
And groanings from the Spirit unutterable
For Shimei in his noisome dungeon pent.
I have sung praises in worse stead than his,
Christ in me joyance and the hope of glory:
But, chafed with fetters and with manacles,
And worse bonds wearing of iniquity,
He sits unvisited of this fair light,
A midnight of no hope within his heart.
Go pray for Shimei thou, and leave me here
To pray, if haply God will touch his heart."

So they two fell apart and mightily strove
Together in intercession and one prayer.

BOOK X.

RE-EMBARKED.

Arrived at Myra on their way toward Rome, Paul and his companions are transferred to a different vessel to pursue their voyage. The new vessel is from Alexandria: it brings thence as passengers for Rome two mutual friends, one of them a Roman, the other a Buddhist from India named Krishna. Rachel, having seen Paul and the Roman greet each other as old acquaintances, soon inquires apart of Paul who the Roman is, and, learning. is thence drawn on into exchange of reminiscence and reflection with her brother. The two at length unite in interceding with Julius on behalf of Shimei. They secure for him the freedom of the deck.

RE-EMBARKED.

Where on the towering shore a mighty gorge
Breaks headlong through the mountains to the sea,
And a deep stream into a haven large
Spreads for the welcome of all ships that sail
The Mediterranean ocean, there of old
Myra, metropolis of Lycia, sat;
Mart once of many meeting nations—now
A few colossal shadows sign and say
Mutely, 'Here Myra was, and she was great!'

At Myra safe arrived and anchor cast,
That Adramyttian vessel disembarked
Her voyagers bound to Rome, and went her way.
When she at Cæsarea touching found
That Jewish prisoner there and bore him thence,
She had suddenly gone sailing unaware,
In transit as of star athwart the sun,
Into the solar light of history;
At Myra parting with him she passed on
Into the rim of dark and disappeared:

A moment in a light she guessed not of
Illuminated for all time to see,
Then heedless dipping deep her plunging keel
And foundering in the gulfs of the unknown!

A bark of Egypt seeking Italy,
Wheat-laden of the fatness of the Nile,
Swung resting in the Myra roadstead nigh.
Hereon were re-embarked that company,
Paul, and the friends that sailed with Paul to Rome—
Fallen Felix too, with his wife spurring him
To hope yet and to strive and still be strong.
Alexandreia sent the vessel forth,
City twice famous, joining to her own
The august tradition of her founder's fame,
The mighty Macedonian's mightier son,
Great Alexander who the whole world gained
Indeed — with what for profit of it all?
At this sea-gate wide opening to the West,
From all the East men met and hence dispersed—
That current laden most which drew to Rome.
Besides from Egypt her hierophants,
Hence thither flocked those worshippers of fire

From Persia holding Zoroaster sage,
Astrologers of Assyria, and from Ind
Confessors of the somber faith of Buddh.

Of many such as these on board that bark
One Indian Buddhist votary there was
Worthy of note: a gentle-mannered man
Deep in himself involved, as who mused much
Of hidden things and hard to understand,
The pathos of the mystery of the world,
The human strife, with the defeat foregone
Companioning the strife and ending it—
Yet ending not a strife that could not end,
But ever, round and round, one dull defeat,
Trod the treadmill of fate, no hope, no goal.
A gentle-mannered man, but sad of cheer,
Krishna his name, pilgrim of many climes,
Not idly curious to behold and learn,
But hiding pity in his heart for men
Seen everywhere the same, poor blinded moles
Toiling and moiling in the sunless mines
Of being, where no joy, whence no escape.
Escape none, or, if any, then escape
Impossible to win except by slow,

And unimaginably slow, process
Of suicide to endless date prolonged,
Æons on æons following numberless,
And fatal transmigrations of the soul
From state to state, from form to form, of self:
Yet progress none that might be felt the while,
But one long-drawn monotony instead
Of labor waste in movement seeming vain,
Cycles of change returning on themselves
Forever, bound to orbits that revolve
Eternal repetitions of the same
Vicissitude (the weaver's shuttle flung
Tediously back and forth from hand to hand —
Or swinging pendulum), 'twixt death and birth,
Lapses from misery to misery
Always, prospect like retrospect stretched out
To vista and perspective vanishing
Of path to be pursued and still pursued
By the undaunted seeker of an end —
He by his own act dying all the time
In ceaseless effort utterly to cease,
Will willing not to will, desire desiring
To be desire no more, pure apathy,
No hope, no fear, no motion of the mind,

Until, through dull disuse and atrophy,
Extinguished be capacity itself
To do or suffer anything, and so,
Down sinking through the bottomless abyss
Of being, at last the fugitive go free,
Emancipate but by becoming — naught!
Krishna thus deeming of his fellow-men,
Their present and their future and their fate,
Hid a vast pity in his heart for them,
Pity the vaster that he could not help.

This melancholy man compassionate,
Who might in musing to himself seem lost,
Yet saw and heard with vigilant quick sense
Whatever passed about him where he stood,
Or where he sat — for most he moveless sat,
Moveless and silent, on the swarming deck.
One man indeed he spake with, yet with him
His speech, grave ever, he spared, and sheathed in tones
Soothingly soft and low like blandishment.
That one man was a Roman; Roman less
To seeming than cosmopolite — his air
An air of long-accustomed conversance

With whatsoever might be seen and learned
Through much Ulyssean wandering to and fro
And up and down among his fellow-men,
And watching of their works and words and ways.
This Roman citizen of the world, mailed proof
In habit of a full-experienced mind
Against commotion from surprise, was now
Visibly moved to wonder seeing Paul.
His wonder checked with reverence and with love
Indignant to behold the captive state
Of one deserving rather wreath than bond,
He stepped toward Paul and with such homage paid
As liege to lord might pay saluted him.
"Grace unto thee, my brother," answered Paul,
"From the Lord Jesus Christ, thy Lord and mine!"
They twain fell on each other's neck and kissed
With tears. Such salutation and embrace —
No more; but this with variant mood was marked
By three that saw it. The centurion
Blent in his look pleasure with his surprise;
But Felix and Drusilla frowned askance
(They also knowing the Roman, as at court
Courtiers know one another — without love);
Those frowned askance, and mixed their mutual eyes

In sinister exchange of look malign
Portending sequel if the chance should serve;
And in Neronian Rome the happy chance
Of mischief, but be patient, scarce could fail!

That gentle Indian with his pregnant eye
Saw all and mused it — then, and after, long —
The cheerful, joyful, reverent greeting given
A Jewish prisoner by a Roman lord
And by the Jewish prisoner so returned
In unaccustomed words ill understood
But solemn like the language of a spell;
This, with the Roman captain's look benign
Approving what surprised him yet; nor less,
The menace of the mutual scowls that met
Darkening each other on the alien brows
Of Felix and Drusilla at the sight —
Most like two clouds that, black already, blown
Together, shadow into a deeper dark!

In due time, anchor weighed with choral sound
Of sailors' voices cheering each himself
And each his fellow in a formless tune,
The ship from out the haven slowly slid,
Urged with the oar but wooing too the wind

With slack sail doubtful drooping by the mast.
Large planes of lucid ocean tranced in calm
They traversed with loth labor of the oar,
Or else were buffeted of winds that blew
Thwart or full opposite day after day,
While they hugged close the Asian shore, then Rhodes
Saw southward, mooring fair her fruitful isle.
The leisures long-drawn-out of those delays,
To Paul and to his friends were prize and spoil.
Grown wonted to the sway of wind and wave,
They spent, cradled at grateful ease, the slow,
Soft-lapsing, indistinguishable hours
That wore the sunny summer season out,
In various converse or communion sweet
Oft with mere sense of mutual nearness nursed.

"Who was that kindly courteous gentleman,'
Thus at fit moment Rachel asked of Paul,
"That spoke so fair my brother coming up?
Roman he seemed, and lordly was his air;
Yet something other, sweeter, differenced him
From his compatriot peers, and I observed
Thou gavest him thy grace from Christ the Lord."

"That, Rachel," Paul replied, "was one I knew —
Almost mightst thou have known him — long ago
In Tarsus; we were boys together there.
But since then twice, with now this added time,
Has God in wisdom made our pathways meet.
That Roman to Damascus went with me
And saw, what time the glory of the Lord
Blinded me to behold at last the True.
But him that glory, seen not suffered, left
For outward vision what he was before,
While inwardly with denser darkness blind,
Reclaimed from atheism to idolatry!
But God had mercy on him; years went by,
And I, with Barnabas to Cyprus come,
Found there this selfsame Roman, governor.
The skeptic whom theophany had made
Religious not, but superstitious, now
Led captive of delusion — worldly-wise
Albeit he was, yet unto God a fool! —
Was given up wholly dupe and devotee
Of a deceiver, Jew, Bar-jesus named,
Pretender to the gift of prophecy.
This sorcerer dared withstand us to the face

Before the governor, who had summoned us
(Not dreaming whom he summoned summoning me)
To tell him of the word of God. But I,
Filled with the Spirit of the Lord — mine eyes
On him, that sorcerer, fastened — uttered words
Which God the Faithful followed with such blast
And blight of blindness on the wretched man
That he groped seeking who would lead him thence.
The governor beheld and wonder-struck
To see God's work God's word at last believed.
The pagan playmate of my boyhood so
Became the changed soul thou hast seen him here,
In Jesus brother, loving and beloved;
And Sergius Paulus thou his name mayst call."

"O Saul," said Rachel, "in what history
Of marvel following marvel has thy life,
Since when that noon Christ met thee in thy way
Damascus-ward, been portioned out to thee!
The stories of the prophets old whom God
Wrought through to show His people how behind
The thick veil of His outward handiwork
He Himself lived and was a present God —
Those tales of wonders, let me own it, Saul,

Had grown to me to seem so far away
From our time, and so alien from the things
We with our eyes behold, hear with our ears,
Much more, with these our hands perform, that I
Almost had fallen, not into disbelief
(Not that, ever, I trust — nay, God forbid!)
Concerning them, but into a listless mind
Which to itself no image of them framed —
Fault well-nigh worse than outright disbelief!
That now the things themselves, nay, things more
strange,
Should be by God repeated in the world,
Nor only so, that one of mine own blood,
My brother, should a chosen vessel be
Of this great grace of God through Christ to men —
This less with wonder than with awe fills me,
And I — believe not, faith were name too faint
For passion such as mine is — I adore!"

Paul bent on Rachel eyes unutterable
Wherein a sense of sympathy serene
Betwixt himself and her he talked with, shone,
And they twain dwelt in a suspense supreme,
Silent, of adoration where they stood —

The rapture of doxology unbreathed
To either doubled as by other shared.
At length Paul spoke; his tones intense and low
Thrilled through the ear of Rachel to her heart:
"O Rachel, He who out of darkness once
Bade the light shine, God, shined into our hearts
Enkindling there this dayspring from on high,
This light of knowing from the face of Christ
The glory inexpressible of God!"

A pause once more of rapt communion; then
This added in a chastened other strain:
"But we such treasure have in urns of clay
Fragile and nothing worth that all in all
The exceeding greatness of the power may be
Not of ourselves but ever only God's!
Constrained I find myself in every way,
But straitened not; perplexed, but not dismayed;
Hunted, but not forsaken; smitten down,
But not destroyed; forever bearing round
Within the body wheresoever driven
The dying of the Lord, that the Lord's life
May also in my body forth be shown.
Therefore I faint not; let my outward man

Fail, if it must, my inward man meantime
Is day by day in fadeless youth renewed.
How light affliction sits upon my heart!
It is but for a moment, and it works
The while for me an ever-growing weight
Of glory fixed forever to be mine!
I look no longer on the things about
Me, seeming to be real, since they are seen,
But far away instead, far, far away
Beyond these, at the things that are not seen.
These for a season, Rachel, the things seen!
But those, the things not seen, eternal they!

"When I saw Stephen upward into heaven
Gaze, and behold there what no eye might see,
The glory of the Ever-living God,
And Jesus standing by His Father's side;
When afterward I saw Hirani stand
Before the anger of the Sanhedrim,
His eyes not seeing what their faces looked,
His ears not hearing what the voices round
Were saying and forswearing to his harm,
But steadfastly his vision fixed afar
And all his hearkening bent for sounds unheard,

Sights, sounds, sent couriers from the world to
come,
The real world, the eternal, and the blest—
How little knew I then what now I know!
O Rachel, why was I not then disturbed
With doubts and fears, and guesses of the true?
The darkness of that hour before the dawn!
The brightness of this full-accomplished day!
The glory of that other day that waits!
The Jacob's ladder and the shining rounds!
The moving pomps of angels up and down
Ascending and descending the degrees
Betwixt the heights of heavenly and my feet!

"Now unto Him that in such darkness died,
But rose amid such brightness from the tomb
And reascended where He was before
To glory inaccessible with God,
And there expects until He thither bring
Us also both to witness and to share
His exaltation to the almighty throne—
To our Lord Christ, Redeemer by His blood,
Worthy, and only worthy, to receive
Ascription without measure of men's praise,

Be honor, worship, thanks, obedience, paid,
And love, even love like His, forevermore!"

Rachel had barely to her brother's words
Breathed fervently her low amen, when he,
The passion of doxology unspent
Yet quivering in his tones, went on and said:
"But, Rachel, all amid this strain of joy
Exulting like a fountain in my heart—
Unspeakable and full of glory indeed,
As Peter matched it with his mighty phrase!—
Yea, in it, as if of it and the same,
I feel a sense of pathos and of pain
And hint of earthly with the heavenly mixed.
I cannot but of Shimei think, and grieve—
The grief indeed a paradox of joy,
Such pity and such anguish of desire
To help and save! Can we not succor him?
Can we not have him forth of his duress
In dungeon into this fair light of day?
I feel it must be possible. Pray thou,
And I will pray, and haply God may touch
The heart of Julius to such act of grace
That at our suit and intercession he

Will bid the wretched bondman up again
Out of the noisome darkness where he pines,
If to full freedom not, at least to breathe
The freshness of the unpolluted air
And feel the force of the reviving sun.
Sick he may be, in prison is, we know,
And neighbor let us count him, taught of Christ
To hold for neighbor any who in need
Is nigh enough to us for us to help.
Sick and in prison Jesus we might find
In Shimei, if for Jesus' sake we go
And carry him the solaces of love!"

"But he, will he receive what we should bring?"
Said Rachel; "would not bitter-making thought
Welling up in him like a secret spring
Of brackish issue gushing from beneath
A crystal runlet pure as Siloa's brook,
Turn for him all our sweetness into gall?"

"Perhaps, perhaps," said Paul; "we cannot know.
That were for thee and me defeat indeed—
To be of evil overcome! But, nay,
Nay, Rachel, let us hope, and overcome
Evil with good. What is impossible?

Is this, even this, impossible — through Christ?
Love, if love perfect be, hopeth all things.
There is in love, as John delights to say,
No fear; for perfect love casteth out fear.
Perfect our love, be faithless outcast fear
No counsellor of ours; but hope instead
Far-seeing, with her forward-looking eyes
Reflecting hither light from that beyond.
Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love
Of God is poured forth in our hearts a stream,
An overflowing, like the river of God,
Fed from the fulness of the Holy Ghost!
O, how omnipotent I feel in him!
But, behold, Julius! Let me speak straightway!"

"O thou, my keeper"—so to Julius Paul—
"Full courteous to thy prisoner often proved,
Nay, more than courteous, kind — beseech thee now
Beyond thy wont be courteously kind!"
"What wilt thou, then?" said Julius. "Grant it me,"
Paul answered, "to reprieve, from chains, I ask not,
But from his dungeon doom, to see the sun

And breathe this vital air, the wretched man
Whom, partly for my sake perhaps, thou keepest
Immured in dismal dark duress below!"

"Strange being thou!" said Julius answering Paul,
Yet answering not, with wonder overpowered.
"That wretch, that miscreant, craven, liar, proved
Corrupter of the faith of men through bribe —
Nay, but assassin, only that he failed,
Assassin disappointed in attempt —
On whose life but thine own? — such man accurst
Do I now hear thee interceding for,
Thee, prisoner thyself, and that — unless
The story of his plot and traitorhood
And band of forty sworn conspirators
Against thee at Jerusalem, have been
Falsely told me — aye, *that* solely through him!
I wonder at thee! Art thou mad? The day
Thy countryman confronted by thee quailed,
Convicted of his dastard perjury
Which aimed to make *thee* murderer of *him* —
Then, Paul, I thought thee sane enough, as thou
With words launched like the thunderbolts of Jove

Didst rive him to his rotten innermost!
Yet then, even then, relenting strangely, thou
Didst melt the hardness that became thee so —
Making thee almost Roman, as I thought —
Melt it into a softness like a woman's.
And now again from thee this wanton whim
And suit of pity for that damnable!
I cannot make thee out — unless it be
Thou art moonstruck, and maudlin-mindedness
At times seize thee betraying thy manhood thus!"

Paul did not answer the centurion's words
With words again; instead — with look serene,
Ascendant, irresistible — received,
Absorbed, and overbore that other's look
(Which, after the words spoken, rested on
Paul's face in pity that was almost scorn)
Quenching it as a shield a fiery dart;
Till Julius, fain to yield yet somewhat save
His pride in yielding, turned from Paul and said
To Rachel, as in condescension dashed
With banter: "Let thy sister if she will
Go carry Shimei tidings of reprieve;
A sister to a brother's murderer go

And take him token of her love — and his!"
A little softening, as he spoke, from sneer,
At the sheer aspect of her loveliness,
An aspect not of weakness, but wherein
There mingled, with the lovely woman's charm,
Something august of saintly matronhood,
Remote from any hint of what could seem
Defect of sane and saving self-control —
Thus wrought upon a little while he spoke,
Julius to Rachel turning spoke such words.

"All thanks," she gently said, "thou art most
kind.
It shall be as thou sayest, for I will go."
She turned, but hung in action, as through doubt;
With artless art of hesitation sweet
Beyond persuasion eloquent, she said:
"Yea, thou art good, and gladly will I go,
But I — I am a woman — were it meet? —
If thou declarest it meet, then it shall be,
And thither will I venture down alone;
For God will round me globe an angel guard
To treasure me from peril and from soil."

Her grace, but more her graciousness, prevailed;

For won upon by her demeanor meek,
Majestic, and that awe of womanhood
Instinctive in a noble breast of man,
The Roman, with even a flush of shame at last
Not altogether hidden as he turned
His bronzéd cheek away, spoke out aloud:
"Varenus!" so he called the soldier's name
Whose turn it was that watch to sentry Paul—
The same that Shimei late had sought to bribe—
"Go bid up Shimei hither from the hold!"

Haggard, dejected, squalid from the filth
And fetor of his dungeon, in surprise
With terror, doubting what awaited him—
Dazed in the sudden light his blinking eyes—
The more bewildered that he could not frame
With any true and steady sight to see
Color, or shape, of person or of thing
Before him or about him anywhere,
Shimei stepped halt and staggering on the deck.
A spectacle for pity to abhor,
And for abhorrence shuddering to behold
With pity—wreck and remnant of a man!
The soldier would not touch to steady him,

But let him shuffle as he might his way.
Scarce more than one or two uncertain steps,
And Shimei insecure of standing stood,
Shaken in all the fabric of the man —
Like some decrepit crazy edifice
Wind-shaken trembling on the point to fall.

Paul saw, and felt his heart within him moved.
To the unmoved centurion thus he spoke:
"Wilt thou not let him rest awhile retired
Apart a little till his force revive
And his eyes grow rewonted to the light?"
"Have thou thy will with him," the Roman said,
"So far as of his chains to ease him not.
Thou art right perhaps; a little added strength
Were well, were timely, in his present plight —
May save him over to added punishment.
So nurse him fair, ye brotherhood," said he,
"And sisterhood, of mercy ill-bestowed!"
And round the Roman glanced, with Roman scorn
Masking some sense of admiration shamed,
Upon the group of ready hearts and hands,
The circle of Paul's fellowship in faith,
Now gathered nigh with looks of wish to help.

BOOK XI.

THE LAST OF SHIMEI.

Shimei in his feebleness and distress is ministered to by the companions of Paul. Thus relieved, he falls asleep and dreams. On his waking, ministration to his needs is renewed ; and, strengthened now with nourishment, he sleeps out the night. The next morning he finds himself an altered man. He at length makes some loth acknowledgment to Paul, who in turn expresses his own sorrow for high words spoken in pride against Shimei. A storm some days after rises, and Shimei meets a sudden and awful doom.

THE LAST OF SHIMEI.

A parable in life of perfect love
(Other than was in heaven to be beheld),
The clustering angels, crowded nigh to see,
Saw in the things that then and there befell.
It might indeed have been a scene let down
Suddenly from above in lively show
Of love in act on earth like love in heaven —
Only that never in heaven is need of act,
From love, of mercy such as now was seen,
A living picture, on that vessel's deck!

Luke the physician, at a sign from Paul,
With Aristarchus, one on either side,
Supported Shimei, tottering as he went
(Too weak to wish or will or this or that,
Or otherwise behave than just submit),
To where with feat celerity meanwhile
The women, of one mind, Rachel and Ruth
And fair Eunicé, in a sheltered place
Had spread, of rug and pillow thither brought,

A sudden couch whereon a man might rest.
Stephen, from out the store of frugal cheer
By his forecasting mother's care purveyed —
Provision for the needs that might attend
The chances of sea-faring — brought and broached
A flagon of sweet wine. This, to the lips
Of Shimei in a slender goblet pressed,
Cheered him his heart and made him seem to live.
All was in silence done, and then, withdrawn
A little from about the man supine,
That company of ministrants, one will —
Among them Mary Magdalené too,
Pathetic, with her deep-experienced eyes --
Kept quiet watch and wished that he might sleep.

And Shimei slept; a deep dissolving sleep —
Unjointed all his members in remiss
Solution of the consciousness of life.
A long deep sleep; a dreamless sleep at first,
Then, as the hours wore on and still he slept,
Delicious reminiscences in dream
(Unconscious hoarded treasure of the brain,)
Were loosed within him of a dewy dawn
Forgotten, and a time when he was young.

He had found the fountain in that land of dream,
And drunk his fill from it with sweet delight,
Famed for its virtue to renew in youth.
The old man was a boy again, at home,
A Hebrew home though on an alien shore.
Perhaps some soft insinuation crept
Into his sleep from that last waking sense
Of his, the sense, to him unwonted long—
A lonely man, of wife, of child, bereft,
Who never sister's gentleness had known—
Of touch from woman's hand; however it was,
Shimei a vision of his mother had.
A son, her only, by his mother's knee,
That mother's blossoming hope, her joy, her pride,
He felt the benediction of a hand,
Her hand, laid like a softness on his brow;
And Shimei's lips, no longer thin and cold,
But warm now, and with flush of lifeblood full,
Moved in responsive welcome of a kiss,
Her kiss, and holy, like a touch of chrism.
How fair the vision was that then he saw!
How sweet the tones were that once more he heard!

Such sound, such sight, were better than sweet
sleep;
And the fond sleeper fain would wake, to dream
So good a dream awake, and to the full
Taste it, with senses and with soul nowise
Bound from the right fruition of their feast.

So, as of his own motion, Shimei woke —
And instantly was sorry for the change.
His eyes he dared not open to the day,
Holding them shut to hold himself asleep.
Alas, in vain! Too late! Full well he knew
Now what he was, and where, and that in truth
His happy boyhood had come back in dream.
Yet lay he lapped in luxury of pain
And pathos, and sweet pity of himself,
And longings toward a past beyond recall,
With something also of a good remorse
That he was such as then he felt he was,
Poor broken worldling, empty heart, and old
(In contrast of his visionary youth!),
Therewith perhaps some upward-groping wish
That he were other. All-undoing stress
It was, of elemental motions blind

About the bases of his being bowed
Like Samson, and his state was overthrown.
Those agéd eyes that had been used to glint
Metallic lusters, or of adamant,
Softened beneath the lids, unseen, and tears
Forced themselves forth down either temple falling.
Instinctively he stirred, and with his hands
(Vainly, encumbered with their manacles!)
He sought to brush those trickling tears away.
They wandered down to mingle with his hair,
Long locks, and thin, of iron grey, unkempt,
Close clinging to the sunken temple walls.
Rachel with Ruth remarked the motions vain,
And gently, without word, moved to his side.
There Rachel with her kerchief wiped the tears
With strokes as of caress, so loving light;
But Ruth, observing for a moment, turned
With token to Eunicé, quick of heart
To understand, who hastening lightly thence
A laver full of water brought, wherefrom
The mother washed the forehead and the face,
As had that agéd man her father been,
Then dried them with a towel clean and sweet.
Not once the while would Shimei lift the lids

That trembled shutting over his dim eyes:
Strange new emotion made him shrink from seeing—
Shame, and a tenderness of gratitude,
And love, that, with wing-footed Memory,
Ran backward to his boyhood and there fell
With tears and kisses on his mother's neck—
Remembered, she, a *woman*—such as these!

The squalid wretchedness of his estate
Forgotten, and its utter hopelessness,
Was it not blesséd, only thus to lie
Ministered to as if he were beloved
Of some one, he who long had no one loved!
Melted like wax within him was his heart,
And when at length they spoke to him, and said,
"Thy hands too, if we might too wash thy hands!"
And when, he neither yes nor no with word
Or sign replying, they, with yes assumed,
Did it, assuaging with all healing heed
The hurts and bruises of the chafing chains,
Then the old man with a convulsive wrench
Turned his whole frame averse from them to hide
The tears that streamed in rivers from his eyes.
"And this they do for love of their Lord Christ!"—

Such muffled words, sobbed out amid his tears
And shaken with the throbs that shook his frame,
Those women seemed to hear from Shimei's lips.
"Lo, Jesus, wilt thou master also me?
I cannot bear the pressure of this love!
Crushed am I under it into the babe
Indeed I dreamed just now I was become!"
So Shimei to himself, in words more clear
With the abating passion of his sobs,
Spoke plaintive with the accents of a child.

A start of tears responsive orbed the eyes
Of Ruth and Rachel at such token shown
Of gracious change in Shimei; grateful tears
They were, and hopeful, and each tear a prayer—
How prevalent, who knows?—for Shimei.
God, in His lachrymary urn reserved
To long remembrance, treasures up such tears!

Paul, at remove with Stephen, beholding all,
Felt a great pang and passion of desire
To bear some part and render a testimony
Of love and of forgiveness toward this man,
Yea, of sweet will to be forgiven and loved
By him in turn, that Shimei needs must trust.

He thought of how the Lord, that extreme night
In which He was betrayed, He knowing well
The Father had given all things into His hands,
And He was come from God and went to God,
Rose from the supper, disarrayed Himself —
As if so laying His majesty aside
To clothe Himself in mightier majesty
Of meekness, with the servant's towel girded! —
Then, pouring water in the basin, kneeled,
Girded in fashion as a menial, kneeled.
The Lord Himself of life and glory kneeled,
Washing and wiping his disciples' feet!
And Judas, Paul remembered, was among them!
"This is my time," said he, "my time at last;
Shimei will not resist nor say me nay,
And I, with mine own hands, will wash his feet."
But Stephen said: "Lo, I have hated him
More wickedly than any, I beseech
Mine uncle let me do this thing to him.
Shimei will know I do it for thy sake,
And it will be to him as if thou didst it."
So, Paul allowing it for his nephew's sake,
Glad to confirm him in that gentleness,
Stephen a ewer of water made haste to bring,

And there amid them all admiring him
Known to have hated Shimei so, he stooped,
With a most beautiful behavior stooped —
Not without qualms of lothness overcome,
Considering he how swift those feet had been,
How swift those agéd feet, how long, had been,
To shed blood, and what blood to shed how swift! —
And dutifully washed and wiped them clean.

The old man now lay utterly relapsed,
Exhausted his capacity to feel,
Resistance therefore, and even reaction, none,
A state suspended between life and death;
So had the vehemence of his passion wrought
On Shimei's weakness to disable him.
The women with sure instinct knew his need;
They lightly on him laid one covering more,
For now the coolness of the night was nigh,
And again wished for him the gift of sleep.
And again Shimei slept, to wake refreshed
Then when the moonless sky was bright with stars,
Stars that not more intently over all
Watched, than those faithful had watched over him.
Refection from their hands, both heedful meet

And choicest possible to case like theirs,
Strengthened the faster for a night-long sleep,
Which with the morning brought him back himself,
A self with pity and terror purified,
But better purified with thanks and love.

So, lapt in a delightsome consciousness,
Half haze, a kind of infant consciousness,
Of being changed to other than before,
Shimei slid sweetly on in reverie—
No words, nay, thoughts even not, pure reverie;
But if that mist of musing in his mind
Had into thoughts, like star-dust into stars,
Been orbed, their purport such as this had been:
'I miss it, and I feel that I should grope
Vainly to find in me the power that once
Was ever mine to be my proper self.
All standing-ground seems melted under me,
Planted whereon I might with hope resist.
It is all emptiness, all nothingness
About me, I am utter helplessness.
Yet somehow it is blesséd helplessness!
Let Him do with me as He will, Who now
Is dealing thus with me through these! O ye,

His ministers, O, holy women, ye,
Behold, I give myself through you to Him!
Ye have conquered me for Him at last with love.
No weapons have I to withstand such might.
Tell Paul that he and ye have overcome
For that both he and ye were overcome
Yourselves first by the love that made you love
Even me, even me, even me, grown gray in sin,
Such sin, amid such light, against such love!
Forgive ye me, forgive, forgive, forgive,
And pray ye all that I may be forgiven
Of Him to Whom henceforth, unworthy I
To be at all accepted to such thrall,
I give myself forever up a slave!'

Thus Shimei, in his formless fantasy,
Which being nor word, nor thought, still less was will,
Mused, like a river lapsing to the sea;
So softly did an inner current draw
Him unresisting whither it desired.
It seemed to Shimei, in that strong access
And overflow of feeling new to him,
As if it would be easy to speak out,

Nay, but as if he must at once speak out,
Aloud, for those to hear toward whom he now
Felt this delicious love and longing; yet
He never did so speak, alas, but wronged
Himself, wronged them, refraining; more, the
Spirit
Of grace nigh quenched with silence! So it fared
With Shimei then, self-shut from needful speech,
As might it with some tender plant denied
Its freedom of the sun and air, that peaks
And pines and cannot open into flower.
Perhaps the habit of his heart life-long
Was winter all too fast for any spring
To solve; perhaps he could not, if he would,
Unbind its cold constriction from himself
For welcome and exchange of sweet good-will
Such as he felt rife round him in the air,
Wooing him, like bland weather, toward full bloom
In frank affections and fair courtesies.
Sad, if indeed the faculty in him
Of finer feeling and the word to fit
Were lost through long disuse, or by abuse!

But it was much in Shimei that thenceforth

He never was bitter again with cynicism ;
The fountains of his evil humor were dry ;
He never vented blast of unbelief
To blight the region round him with black death
To every springing plant and opening flower
Of cheerful faith in human nobleness ;
That mordant tongue refrained itself from sneer.
Yea — this with travail of will through enforced
lips —
Shimei, in frugal phrase, but phrase sincere,
Gave, of his conscience, rather than his heart,
Thanks to them all that ministered to him.
More : after days of silence, passed in muse
And struggle in secret with himself, and prayer,
Once, having asked to speak with Paul apart
And easily won what he desired, he said :
" Behold, O Saul, I think that I have erred,
Mistaking thee, perhaps myself mistaking —
Yea, but I know that I mistook myself,
And mistook God, both what He was and wished ;
Most wickedly mistook Him, honestly —
Honestly deeming Him other than He was,
Imputing honestly what was not His will —
Mistaking, with no heed not to mistake !

This was my wickedness, that lightly I
Misdeemed Him such an one as I myself.
And thee I wronged comparing thee with myself,
And hated thee for what, I now am sure,
Thou wast not. Saul, I need to be forgiven!"—
Wherewith his heavy head the old man bent low,
With his uplifted hands in manacles
Seeking to hide his face as if in shame;
Not shame that he had sinned, but that he now
Had spoken thus. Yet did that gesture naught
Diminish from his words, but only show
At cost how great he had wrung them from himself.

Paul understood the anguish of his mind,
And said to Shimei: "Nay, my brother, nay,
Forgiven thou art, nor needst to be forgiven,
Or at least I have nothing to forgive thee;
I long ago forgave thee all in all.
But I myself would be of thee forgiven!
I vexed thee once with high words spoken in pride;
I never have forgiven myself that pride.
Forgive me thou it, thou, that hadst thy hate
Needlessly blown to hotter flame thereby.
Let us forgive each other and love henceforth,

As God, for Christ's sake, will us both forgive!"
As Paul these last words spoke, he strongly yearned,
Even for Christ's sake, to throw himself in tears
On Shimei's neck and there weep out his love.
But he, for Shimei's sake, forbore; he saw
That Shimei, softened as he was, and changed,
Was not ripe for forgiveness so complete.
So Paul forbore, rejoiced that Shimei spoke
No word, and signified with silence naught,
In blasphemy of the Belovéd Name;
Name by himself in hope, not without fear,
Pronounced — like costliest pearl at venture flung
Before what under foot might trample it
And round to rend the largess-giver turn.

The chill obstruction never to the end
Was altogether thawed in Shimei's heart
To make him childlike placable and mild.
Perhaps more time, and vernal influence
Permitted longer to brood over him,
Had made it different; but the time was short
For Shimei in that air of Paradise.

The voyage long had been with froward winds;
At length those winds blew into tempest wild,

With winter lightnings strangely intermixed,
God thundering marvellously with His voice:
All on that ship were awed, and some appalled.

Shimei, hugging himself upon the deck
Where most were gathered, for to most it seemed
Better to stand beneath the open sky
Shelterless, than, though sheltered, not to see
God make himself thus terrible in storm —
Shimei, who, not more helpless than the rest,
Felt a degree more helpless through his chains,
Listened intently, with some power of calm
Communicated to him, while, in tones
Depressed unshaken into depths of awe,
Paul, meek inheritor of the universe,
As conscious child to God through Jesus Christ —
The spirit of adoption in his heart
That moment crying, "Abba Father!" — spoke
Of how those dwelling in the secret place
Of the Most High, beneath the shadow abode
Of the Almighty, safe from every harm.

Amid the booms of thunder bursting nigh
The dreadful forks of lightning flashed the while
And fell all round the ship into the sea,

Frequent, dividing pathways blinding bright
Between sheer walls of blackness built like stone,
So dense was piled the darkness of the night!
For it was night, no moon, no star, and cloud
Hung drooping in festoons from all the sky
Wind-swept along the bosom of the deep —
Sky only by the lightning flashes seen,
At intervals, yet every moment felt,
Oppressive, like a mighty incubus.
The lightning flashes thick and thicker fell,
Near, nearer, deadlier, as in conscious aim,
Like the fierce vengeful flames from heaven that once
Elijah prophet, on Mount Carmel, drew
Down on his altar trenched about with flood:
Those tongues of fire that circling trench lapped dry,
But these divided tongues of lightning seemed
Equal to lick the boundless ocean up!

The watchers huddling on the deck beheld
In silence — for now also Paul was dumb —
The imminent menace of the elements.
Then what might seem a frightful sign from heaven!

A leap of lightning and a rending roar
Of thunder at one selfsame moment broke,
Sudden, and nigh at hand — as if he, seen
Of John on Patmos isle, that angel dread
(Who, setting his right foot upon the sea
And his left foot upon the land, so cried
With a loud voice) now standing on this ship
Had once more cried and loosed the thunders seven,
So manifold the noise! — and therewith swayed
The sword of God in a descending stroke
On some one there select for punishment.
They looked, and, lo, the fearful stroke had fallen
On Shimei; he lay lifeless on the deck.
No motion, save of falling, and no voice —
Appalling silence and appalling calm!
Close at the foot of the tall mast he fell,
Against which with his shoulder he had leaned
To stay him where he stood and watched the storm.
The storm seemed broken with that burst of rage,
And quieted itself through slow degrees
Of sullenness to peace. But the tall mast
At top had been enkindled with the touch
Of the fell lightning, and it burned a while

Lifted amid the tempest and the night,
A beacon flaming from the Most High God.

Such was the end of Shimei, unforeshown ;
To this he tended all those devious ways !
Next morning mid a weather pacified
They shrouded him for burial in the deep.
"Until the sea give up its dead!" said Paul
Solemnly, as the corse went weighted down.
Julius would not let free his hands from chains;
"Culprit he was and culprit he shall go,"
He said, "to Hades by this watery way.
Incenséd Jupiter despatched him hence,
And Neptune will convey him duly down
To where their brother Pluto will behold
Upon him the Olympian's thunderbrand,
And send to Rhadamanthus to be judged!"

But Paul said to his company apart:
"Let us not judge before the time; the Day,
The Day, that shall declare it. Let us hope;
The mercy of the Lord is measureless:
It is, even like His judgment, a great deep,
And it endures forever; as the psalm
Sings it, again and yet again, in long

Antiphony of praise that cannot end.
Think not, because the promise is no harm
Shall light on any one who dwells within
The secret place of the Most High, that thence,
Seeing this awful-seeming way of death
Has found out Shimei, he perforce has proved
Not to have fixed his dwelling ere he died
Safe in the shadow of the Almighty's throne.
The safety promised is not for the flesh,
But for the spirit. The outward perishes
In many ways that to the senses seem
Preclusive quite of hope for life to come.
But, so the inward bide untouched of harm,
The true self lives and is inviolate.
That lightning did not fall on Shimei's soul;
No certain sign was it of wrath divine:
Nay, even perhaps the opposite of such,
It may have been a fiery chariot
With fiery horses hither sent from heaven,
To bear him up Elijah-like to God.
Far be it to say that this indeed was so;
Yet often last is first, as first is last.
Ye saw how wrought upon our brother was
Of late to be how different from himself!

I trust he trusted in the atoning blood.
I shall have hope to see him yet endued
In shining robes of Jesus' righteousness,
Translucent shining robes wherethrough the soul
Herself shows shining in essential white!
God grant it, and farewell to Shimei!"

BOOK XII.

PAUL AND KRISHNA.

Felix and Drusilla on the one hand and Krishna on the other disclose the contrasted feelings severally excited in them by what they had just witnessed in the lot of Shimei. Krishna seeks from his friend Sergius Paulus explanation of the relations that subsisted between those ministering Christians and the sufferer. He at length requests and obtains an interview with Paul, and the two have a conversation, one result of which is that Krishna asks to hear a full account of the life and character of Jesus Christ. Paul proposes that Mary Magdalené give this account, but Krishna courteously declines to receive it from the lips of a woman. The ship meantime puts in at The Fair Havens, whence, after a short stay in that anchorage, it sets sail, against the advice of Paul.

PAUL AND KRISHNA.

As one transported to a different sphere,
Some sinless planet fairer far than ours,
Amid new scenes and aspects there beheld,
Would watch and wonder and not understand,
So had the most of that ship's company,
Not understanding, but much wondering, watched
What passed between the wretched Shimei
And those his ministers of grace and love.

Felix, discoursing with Drusilla, said
(For he, by virtue of his being himself,
Perforced divined accordingly — amiss)
"Much painful cultivation, for no fruit!
Paul, turn and turn about, that time did seem
His enemy at advantage to have had,
And prospect was that Shimei, won to him
With all those unexpected services
(Sore needed, in such sorry case, no doubt!)
Would, could he first make shift to clear *himself*,
Right face about at Rome and, far from being

An adversary witness against Paul,
Swear him snow-white with turncoat testimony.
How easily king Jupiter, with that pass
Of playful lightning, brought it all to naught!"
Said Felix; then, with change abrupt from sneer,
Grim added this, in sullen afterthought:
"That lightning was a neat dispatch for *him!*
I wish that it had fallen on *me* instead."
"Ill-omened from thy lips such words as those,"
Drusilla answered. "And what love to me
Speak they, thy wife and queen — not with her lord
Joined in thine imprecation dire of doom?
Perhaps indeed we shall be separate
In death — with death, despite the difference,
But differently horrible to both!
For I have *my* forebodings, bred of thine,
And dread to be somehow hereafter caught
In some form of calamity unknown
But unescapable and horrible
And final and fatal as that Shimei's.
And what if he, our son (thine image — form,
And face, and character, and all) dear pledge
To me of love that once his father bore
His mother, happy she as worthy judged,

Once!—what if he, our little Felix too
Be in that dread catastrophe involved!"

Drusilla thus half feigned contagious fears,
But half she felt them; for in truth she now,
So long in shadow from her husband's mood,
Was under power of gloomy imaginings.
Yet, felt or feigned her fears, she made them spells
This day to conjure with, when to her own
Image the little Felix's she joined
In desperate hope to spur her husband's spirit
Out of the slough of his despondency
And comfort him by making him comfort her.
But Felix was not fiber fine enough
To feel even, less to heed, appeal wrung out
Though from sincerest pain for sympathy;
And now his own crass egoism coarsely knew
How shallow, or how hollow, or how false,
This subtler egoism of his consort was.
Drusilla's art defeated its own end;
Felix more murkily lowered, and muttered fierce
Betwixt set teeth in husky tones and low:
"Aye, and why *not* thou too along with me?
Count thyself meant—thyself not less than me—

In what that memorable day was said
At Cæsarea in the judgment hall —
Said, and much more conveyed without being said —
By that Jew Paul, of dark impending doom.
If I am wicked, sure thou art wicked too;
The gods must hate us, if they hate, alike.
Let us, since hated jointly, jointly hate.
Perhaps compact and cordial partnership
Betwixt us in some hatred chosen well
Will be almost as good as mutual love!"
Drusilla to such savage cynicism
Gave loth ear bitterly, as one well sure
It were not wise in anything to cross
Her husband's brutal whim, and he went on:
"There is that milksop Sergius Paulus — *he*
Roman, forsooth! The Roman in his blood,
If ever Roman ran therein true red,
Has been washed white with something else infused.
I much misdoubt that Paul has brought him round
To be disciple of the Nazarene.
A pretty pair, a Roman and a Jew —
Like us, my dear Drusilla! And the Jew,
In either case, the chief one of the pair!"

With such communings entertained those two,
Adulterer and adulteress, the hours;
The passion that they once had miscalled love,
Yea, even that passion — long in either breast
With the disgust of sick satiety
Palled — now at length by guilt and guilty fears,
Brood of ambition disappointed, slain:
But in the ashes of such burned-out love
Smouldered the embers of self-fuelled hate,
Fell fire that thus on Sergius fixed its fangs!

Meanwhile that Indian Krishna, deep in muse,
Masked with impassable demeanor mild
From all about him, from himself even, masked
A trouble of wonder that he could not lay.
He gazed with gentle furtiveness at Paul
And strove to read the riddle of the man.
He felt Paul's spirit different from his own;
His own was placid with placidity
Resembling death, or trance and apathy
That would be, were it perfect, death. But Paul,
Not placid, peaceful rather, seemed to live
Not less but more intensely than the rest,
His fellow-creatures round him in the world;

A life of passion reconciled with peace!
'Impossible! Passion reconciled with peace!'
Thought Krishna; 'I seek peace through passion slain,
Expecting, I the seeker, not to be
At all, the moment I a finder am.
This Hebrew has the secret now of peace;
Strange peace, not passionless, but passionate! —
Extinction not of being, here forestalled,
Like that for which I strive by ceasing striving
(With fear lest after all I miss the mark,
And only strive to cease, not cease to strive)
Nay, no nirvâna antedated, his —
That hope of our lord Buddha hard to win —
But life increased with life to such a power
As is the mighty river's grown too great
To register in eddy or ripple even
Resistance in its channel overcome.
Is life then, boundless, better than blank death?'

So Krishna mused in doubt beholding Paul,
Until at last to Sergius Paulus he,
Breaking the seals of silence, spoke and said:
"If to thy thinking meet, bring me, I pray,

To speak with Paul, so named, thy friend as seems.
But first tell me who was, and what, that Jew
To such plight of sheer wretchedness reduced
That to be rid by lightning of his life
Seemed blessing, whatsoever might ensue
Hereafter to him in his next estate,
Doubtless some sad metempsychosis due.
Was he perhaps a kinsman near of Paul?"
"Nay, kinsman none, save as all Jews are kin,
Descended from the same forefather old,"
Said Sergius. "Then perhaps of some of those,
Near kinsman," Krishna said, "women with men,
Who watched with that long patience over him,
And won him as from death to life with love?"
"Nay, also not their kinsman," Sergius said,
Pleasing himself with saying no more, to see
How far the silence-loving Indian drawn
By unaccustomed wonder still would seek.
"Some reverend father of his people, then,"
Krishna adventured guessing, "whom, oppressed
With undeserved calamity, they yet
Honored themselves with honoring to the end?"
"O nay, far otherwise than such, he was,'
Said Sergius, "vile, most vile by them esteemed,

And that of rich desert, a man of shame
And crime committed or fomented still."
"Then haply — not of purpose, but by chance"—
Said Krishna, groping deeper in his dark,
"That vile man yet, if even by wickedness,
Had wrought some service to these kindly folk
Which they would not without requital pass?"
"Still from the mark," said Sergius, "thy surmise.
That evil man no end of evil deed
Instead had plotted and led on in guile
Against these gentle people to their woe.
Last, and but late, during this selfsame voyage
Of theirs from Syria to Rome, on board
That other vessel whence they came to us,
He sought, with midnight bribe and treachery,
To compass violent death for Paul, a man,
As thou hast seen, beyond belief beloved,
And for good cause, of all. That failing, he
With perjury and well-supported fraud
Of adamantine front and impudence,
Charged upon Paul attempt to murder *him*."

So Sergius Paulus, with some generous heat,

And horror of the heinous things he told.
He said no more and Krishna naught replied.

After much vexing controversy vain
With winds that varying ever blew adverse,
They had made the roadstead of The Havens Fair.
Here they dropped anchor, glad of peace and rest
And leisure to consider of their way,
Whether they still would forward stem despite
The threats of winter, or there wait for spring.

Krishna fell silent when those things he heard
From Sergius Paulus; silent Krishna fell,
But in his bosom shut deep musings up
Whereof the first he, in due season brought
To speech with Paul while they at anchor rode,
Propounded with preamble soft and suave
In words like these: "Much merit hast thou hope
Doubtless, yea, and most justly, to have earned,
Thou, and thy Hebrew fellow-voyagers,
With all that ill-deservéd kindness shown
Him, thy base countryman, whom, thunderstruck,
Fate hurried lately hence to other doom.
A millstone burden bound about the neck
Is karma such as his to weigh one down—

'Karma,' we say; but otherwise perhaps
Thou speakest; merit or demerit, what
Accrues to one inseparable from himself,
In part his earning, heritage in part,
The harvest reapt of virtue or of vice—
Aye, karma such as his was weighs one down
In dying, to new life more dire than death.
Hard-won a karma like thine own, but worth
The winning though ten thousand times more hard!"

Paul felt the Indian's gentleness and loved
Him with great pity answering him: "I know
Thy meaning, and I take the courtesy,
While yet the praise I cannot, of thy words.
My karma is not mine as won by me
With either easy sleight or hard assay—
The karma thou hast seemed in me to find:
That was bestowed, and is from hour to hour
With ever fresh bestowal still renewed.
I had a karma once indeed my own,
Much valued, wage it was of labor sore,
But it grew hateful in my opened eyes
And I despised it underneath my feet
To be as dross rejected and abjured."

Paul's sudden vehemence in recital seemed
Less vehemence from recalling of long-past
Strong spurning, than that spurning now renewed.
Unmoved the Indian save to mild surprise
Made answer: "Our lord Buddha teaches us
Our karma is inalienably ours,
The fatal fruit of what we do and are,
No more to be divided from ourselves
Than shadow from its substance in the sun.
But, nay, that figure fails; our karma is
Substantial and enduring more than we.
We die, our karma lives; it shuffles off
Us as outworn, and takes unto itself
Forever other forms to fit its needs,
Until the cycle is filled of change and change,
And misery and existence cease together.
Such karma is, the one substantial thing,
And such are we, mere shadows of a day.
Pray then explain to me how thou dost say
Thou ridst thee of a karma once thine own;
And how moreover thou canst add and say
Thou tookst another karma, given, not won.
I fain would understand the doctrine thine."

With something of a sweet despondency
Pathetically tingeing his good will,
Paul on the gentle Indian gazed and said:
"O brother, with all wish to meet thee fair,
Yet know I that I cannot answer thee,
Save as in parable and paradox
Beyond thine understanding, yea, and mine."

Paul so replied because his mind indeed
Sank in a sense sincere of impotence;
But partly too because he felt full well
How all-accomplished in the skill of thought,
How subtle, and how deep, the Indian was,
As how by nature and by habit fond
Of allegory and of mystery.
He deemed that he should best his end attain
Of feeding this inquiring spirit fine
With the chief truth, by frankly staggering him,
As the Lord staggered Nicodemus once,
With that which in his doctrine was the highest
And hardest to receive or understand,
Set forth in terms of shadow to perplex,
But also tempt to further curious quest.
Merging the Indian's idiom in his own

And lading it with unwonted sense, Paul said:
"That karma, erst so valued, I escaped
How? by becoming other than I was.
The old man died and a new man was born,
With a new karma given him, of pure grace,
A seamless robe of snow-white righteousness,
Enduement from the hand of One that died
To earn the right of so bestowing it.
Raiment of filthy rags with pride I had worn
Before, not knowing, painful patchwork pieced
Upon me of such works of righteousness
Mine own as cost me dear indeed, yet worth
Nothing to hide my nakedness and shame.
Now I am clad in Jesus' righteousness,
A shining vesture, with nor seam nor stain."

"Proud words, albeit not proudly spoken, thine,"
Said Krishna; "spotlessly enrobed art thou
In righteousness and karma without flaw,
Then thou hast reached the issue of The Way
And art already for nirvâna ripe:
Gautama could not make a bolder claim
When, conquering, he attained the Buddhaship.
Yet meekly thou madest mention of pure grace,

And merit all another's, not thine own.
A paradox indeed, perplexing me,
Such boldness mixed with such humility."
"Yea," Paul said, "the humility it is
That makes the boldness thou hast found in me;
It were defect of right humility
Not boldly to obey when Christ bids do.
Christ bids me take His perfect righteousness;
I can be humble but by taking it —
Boldly? yea, or as if boldly, for here
Humility and boldness twain are one.'

"To thee thy teacher Christ," said Krishna, "seems
Something the same as Buddha is to me:
Yet other, more; not teacher simply, Christ
To thee, and master, setter forth of wise
Instructions and commands obeying which
Thou also now, as he once saved himself,
Mayst thyself save through merit hardly earned.
Thy Christ is will, not less than wisdom; power
And help, as well as guidance in the way.
Sovereign creator and imparter, he

Saves thee, thou trustest, through new life be-
stowed,
Which makes thee other than thou wast before,
And therefore frees thee from the fatal yoke
And bondage of the karma thou hadst won
With labor when thou wast the former man :
The words are easy, but the sense is hard."

"Hard?" Paul said; "nay, outright impossible
To any soul of man that still abides
His old first natural self unchanged to new.
Submit thyself unto the righteousness
Of God, and thou the mystery shalt know
With knowledge deeper than the mind's most deep
Divinings of the things she cannot speak."

"To fate, the universe, and necessity,"
Said Krishna, "I submit, because I must.
But to submit because I will, to any thing,
Much more to any one, that is, give up
My will, which is my self, my very self,
To be another's and no longer mine,
Consent to be another person quite
Than I have been, and am, and wish to be—
This thou proposest to me, if I take

Rightly thy words to mean thou thus hast done,
Becoming what thou art by vital change
From something different that thou wast before.
I frankly tell thee I have not the power
So to commute myself, had I the will."

"'I cannot' is 'I will not' here," said Paul;
"No power is needful of thine own save will:
Will, and thou canst; God then in thee is power.
Consider, it is only to submit."
"I feel my inmost will in me disdain,"
Said Krishna, "this effacement of myself."
"Yea, yea," said Paul, "it is the carnal mind
In thee, the primal unregenerate self
Ever in all at enmity with God,
Which is not subject to the law of God,
Neither indeed can be; to be, were death
To that old self which must resist, to live:
The carnal mind is enmity to God;
When enmity to God ceases in one,
Then ceases in that one the carnal mind,
The original man with his self-righteousness
His karma, if thou please, his good, his ill.
He is no more, and all that appertains

To him is dead and buried out of sight
Forever; but there lives a second self
By resurrection from that sepulcher—
By fresh creation rather from the dead—
A new regenerate man at one with God,
For to the law of God agreed in will,
Replaced the carnal with the spiritual mind,
Warfare and death exchanged for life and peace."

Into Paul's voice, he ceasing with those words,
There slid a cadence as of reverie:
He seemed to muse so deeply what he said
That he less said than felt it; 'life' and 'peace,'
So spoken, no mere sounds upon the tongue,
Were audible pulses of the living heart.
Invasion thence of power seized Krishna's soul,
And, 'Life and peace!' he murmured, 'Life and peace!'
But said aloud: "Strange union, peace with life!
We look for peace only with death, last death,
That death indeed beyond which nothing is,
No further transmigration of the soul,
No soul, no karma, all pure passionless
Non-being; not a state, since state implies

Some subject of a state, and here is none,
To do or suffer or at all to be:
Absolute zero, such the Buddhist's peace."

"'I am come,' Jesus said," so Paul replied,
"'That ye might have life, more abundant life.'
Life, life, deep stream and full, a river of God,
Pours endless, boundless, from the heart of Christ;
'Ho, every one that thirsteth, drink,' said He,
'Lo, drink and live with mine eternal life.'"

"I fear fallacious promises of good,"
Sighed Krishna; "life were good indeed with peace.
But me, I hope not any good save flight,
Save flight and refuge inaccessible
From persecuting and pursuing ill.
Being is misery; I would cease to be;
No hope have I, and no desire, but that.
Hope is for children; I am not a child
To chase the ends of rainbows, seeking gold:
There is no hope that does not make ashamed.
I dare not hope, eagerly, even for death,
Lest that likewise elude my clutch at last.
Despair no less I shun; despair is naught
But hope turned bitter and sour, postponed too long.

I only seek to cease from hope, from fear,
From every passion that can shake my calm.
Calm is my good, and perfect calm is death,
Therefore I wait for death with death-like calm.
Thou wouldst disturb the calm with hope of life,
Fair, but fallacious; let me alone to die."

With soft pathetic deprecation so
Krishna, in form of words, half faltering, begged
From Paul no more, yet added: "I would hear
Something of what he was, thy master; what
He did as well as taught; and whence he came,
And when, and where, and how; and how he lived
And died, having achieved his Buddhaship."

"For me," Paul said, "I never truly knew
My Master while He lived among us here,
Almighty God incarnate in the form
Of servant — glory and blessing to His name! —
Though after He in triumph from the dead
Rose, and ascended far above all height
Into the heaven of heavens to be with God —
Whence he had stooped the dreadful distance down
To His humiliation among men —
Then He revealed Himself in power to me,

And I beheld His face and heard His voice,
And knew Him for co-equal Son of God.
But thou, besides that in this power and glory
No man may see Him save He show Himself,
Wouldst wish a picture of the life He lived,
The manner of man He was, while still on earth,
The death He died, and how He died His death.
There is one here among us well can draw
The living picture thou wouldst look upon,
For she was with Him when He walked the ways
Of Galilee and Jewry doing good;
She saw Him suffer when by wicked hands
His blindfold yet *more* wicked countrymen —
Alas, among them I! — put Him to death.
With early morning at His sepulcher,
His emptied sepulcher, she weeping stood
And saw — but what she saw and all her tale
Of Jesus as she knew and loved Him here,
Is Mary Magdalené's right herself
With her own lips and is her joy, to tell."

"Lord Buddha would not let a woman teach,"
Indulging so much of recoil concealed
As might consist with utmost courtesy

Said Krishna; but, with wise avoidance, Paul:
"And Mary Magdalené will not teach,
But only in simplicity with truth
Bear testimony of eye-witness how
Immanuel Jesus lived His life on earth."

While thus they talked a movement on the deck,
Words of command and bustle to obey,
Betokened that the purpose was to leave
The sheltered anchorage of The Havens Fair
And tempt the dangers of the winter deep.
Paul saw it and suddenly broke off discourse
With Krishna, saying to him: "They err in this;
Surely we here should winter. Let me speak
A moment with the master of the ship."

Krishna with such surprise as disapproved
Dimly in his immobile features shown,
Watched while this intermeddling strange went on;
Strange intermeddling ventured, strangely borne,
Captive to captor bringing advice unsought;
For Paul to the centurion also turned
When now the master and the owner both
Agreed against him; but that Roman chose
Likewise his part with them to sail away.

BOOK XIII.

SHIPWRECK.

A violent storm occurs and the vessel is wrecked. Krishna, having carefully noted the part that Paul takes in the rescue of the lives of all on board, and having noted besides the miracles performed by Paul on the island of Malta where they come safe to shore, brings himself to signify now his willingness to hear from Mary Magdalené her story of Jesus Christ. A company assemble, including, with the Christians, Julius as well as Krishna, and Mary begins her narrative. This after a time is interrupted by a peremptory summons from Felix to Paul, to which Paul responds in person.

SHIPWRECK.

The south wind softly blew a favoring breeze
As forth they put and stood for Italy:
But that fair mother in her bosom bore
Offspring of storm that hastened to the birth.
For soon the fondling weather changed to fierce,
And, blustering from the north, Euraquilo
Beat down with all his wings upon the sea,
Which under that rough brooding writhed in foam
To whirlpool ready to engulf the ship.
No momentary tempest swift as wild;
But blast of winter wanting never breath
Poured from all quarters of the sky at once
And caught the vessel like a plaything up
Hurling it hither and thither athwart the deep.
The sails were rent and shredded from the masts;
The boat, to be the hope forlorn of life,
Was hardly come by, so the hungry wave
Desired it as a morsel to its maw.
The ship through all her timbers groaned and
shrieked
And all her joints seemed melting with the fray

And fracture of the jostling elements.
At their wits' end, those mariners distraught,
Feeling the deck dissolve beneath their feet,
With undergirding helped the anguished ship;
While, worse than waters waiting to devour,
A sea of quicksand seethed, they knew, full nigh.

So the night fell but brought no stay to storm;
Fresh fury rather every darkening hour.

The dismal daylight dawned, and wind and wave,
Gnashing white teeth of foam, all round the ship
Howled like wild beasts defeated of their prey.
Then, as to bait those monster ravening mouths,
They portion of the lading overboard
Fling, in the hope that lightened so the bark
Springing more buoyant may outride the storm.

But the storm thickened as the third day dawned,
And not the crew alone but all on board
Worked the ship's gear in the increasing gale.
They thus bestead, the heavens above them lowered
Day after day that neither sun nor stars
One instant flickered in the firmament;

The blotted blackness made one dreadful night
Of day and night confounded in the gloom.
Hope now went out, last light to leave the sky,
Outburning sun and moon and star all quenched
Before her in that drowning drench of dark—
Hope too went out, touched by the hand of death.

Then Paul stood forth, himself with fasting faint,
Amid those famished faint despairing souls
And upward reaching high his hand to heaven,
There kindled once again the star of hope.
Chiding them fairly that they did not heed
His warning word betimes to shun that harm,
He gave them cheer that they should yet escape,
All should escape with life from this assay;
Only the ship must suffer wreck and loss.
"The angel of the Lord, that Lord," said Paul,
"Whose with all joy I am and whom I serve,
As ye have seen, with worship night and day,
Stood by me in the night and said to me:
'Fear thou not, Paul; thou art to stand in Rome
Before the bar of Cæsar; lo, thy God
Hath to thee given all those that sail with thee.'
Be of good cheer then, ye; for I believe

God that He will perform His word to me.
Upon an island look to find us cast."

Full fourteen days the ship went staggering on
A helpless hulk amid the Adrian sea,
When now the sailors, deeming that they neared
Some coast-line, sounded in the midnight dark;
Then farther drifting sounded once again
To find themselves indeed upon the shoals.
Here, fearing to be driven upon rocks,
They anchored, and so waiting wished for day.

And now a dastard thing those sailors schemed:
Under pretext to cast one anchor more,
As to that purpose they let down the boat,
Minded therein to steal their own escape
Leaving the rest to perish with the ship.
But Paul perceived their fraud and subtlety
And said to Julius with his soldiery;
"Let those men go and *ye* cannot be saved;"
Whereon the soldiers cut the lowering ropes,
Sending the boat to surf and reef a prey.

As broke the fourteenth morning yet forlorn.
Paul, unconfessed the captain of the ship

And master of his fellow voyagers,
In the dim twilight of the struggling dawn
Stood on the slippery deck amidst them all
And stoutly cheered them to take heart of hope
Break their long fast and brace themselves with food.
"For not a hair shall fall from off the head
Of any one of you," said he, and took
Therewith himself, in act more eloquent
Than spoken word, bread and gave thanks to God
In presence of them all; then breaking it
Forthwith began to eat; this heartened them
That they likewise strengthened themselves with meat.
Thus comforted, once more the laboring ship
They lighten of her lading and the wheat
Sow in the barren brine.

The land descried
They knew not, but there was no land unknown
That were not better than that wallowing sea.
So, cutting loose their anchors, they made sail
And drove the vessel aground upon a beach,
Where the keel plunged into the yielding sand
Which closing heavy upon it held her fast;

But the free stern rocked on the billowing surge
That soon atwain must break her in the midst.

Hardness of habit and of discipline
Partly, and partly a self-regarding fear
Lest they be held to answer with their lives,
If even amid the mortal panic pangs
Of shipwreck they should let their charge escape,
Made now those Roman soldiers, in the jaws
Themselves yet of the common peril hung,
Ready to put their prisoners to the sword;
But Julius stayed them for the sake of Paul.
"You that can swim," he shouted, "overboard!"
Some thus, and some on spars buoyed up, and some
On other floatage of the breaking wreck,
They all got safe to shore, not one soul lost.

The master of the rescue still was Paul;
Calm, but alert, completely self-possessed—
(Possessor of himself, yet not himself
Considering, save to sacrifice himself
Freely at need); his courage and his hope
Inspiring hope and courage; self-command
In him aweing the rest to self-command;
His instinct instant and infallible

Amid the terror and the turbulence, —
Winds howling and sea heaving and strait room
For nigh three hundred souls in face of death! —
Each moment seeing ere the moment passed
What the need was and what the measure meet
To match it — that serene old man and high
Was as an angel there descended who
Could had he chosen at once have stayed the storm,
But rather chose to wield it as he would.

The captain of the vessel and the man
Whose was the vessel, these, with Julius too,
Roman centurion as he was in charge,
Grouped themselves close by Paul and heard his word
And had it heeded without stay by all.
"I shall be last to leave the ship," Paul cried,
"Do therefore ye the things that I advise.
The women first. Lady Drusilla, thou
Commit thyself to four picked sailors, these" —
The master of the vessel chose them out —
"Two soldiers with them — Julius, by thy leave
And of thy choice — and on this ample spar

Supported thou shalt safely come to land;
And, Madam, thy little son shall go with thee."
They lashed them to the timber, lowered it fair
(With Felix desperately hugging it,
The image of a sordid craven fear);
The men detailed leapt overboard to it,
And steering it as they could with feet and hands
Let the sea wave on wave wash it ashore:
She was indignant to be rescued so,
But by abrupt necessity was tamed.

"Let me, I pray thee, save thy sister, Paul,"
Said Sergius Paulus, who, assuming yea,
Forthwith led Rachel — she with such a grace
Of confidence in him as made him strong
Following — to where a fragment of the deck
Disjointed in the vessel's agony
Lay loosened, which he clove and wrenched away;
Then watching when the vessel listed right
And the sea met it with a slope of wave,
They, this beneath them, clinging to it, slid
Down the steep floor into the frothing brine
Stephen was by and helped them make the launch.
Sergius, from the side opposite to her —

To steady the light wreckage all he might
Lest wanting balance it should overturn —
Reaching across, kept Rachel's fingers clasped
In hold upon the wavering wood, until,
What with his oarage and the wash of waves,
They found a melting foothold on the sand.

Krishna stood wishing to be serviceable,
And when to Aristarchus, stout and brave,
Paul was commending Mary, at a look
From the Indian that imported such desire,
Leave was given him to undertake for Ruth.
Each of the two life-savers rent a door
From off its hinges and thereon secured
The women awed in that extreme assay
Yet girded to a constancy of calm,
And, Stephen helping, lowered them to the deep.
Krishna was let down after by a rope,
No swimmer he, but Ruth too held the rope
And drew him to the float whereon she tossed.
Greek Aristarchus was a swimmer born
And practised, and he plunged headforemost down,
Soon to emerge with easy buoyancy
And aim unerring true where Mary rode.

The two then — Aristarchus in the lead
Teaching the Indian how, and, with the rope
Flung to his hand at his desire by Ruth
And by him featly bound about his waist,
Drawing the floatage forward, while his own
He pushed with swimming — won their way to
shore.
Twice Aristarchus was, for stress of wave,
Fain to release his hold upon his float,
So fierce the tug, and sudden, at his waist;
But he, by swimming and by seamanship
Consummate joined to strength well-exercised,
Strength by the exigence redoubled now,
Both times regained it and thenceforward kept.
Mary meanwhile, forsaken, faltered not;
She felt the stay of other hands than his.

All his advices and permissions Paul
Put forth in such continuous sequence swift
That well-nigh simultaneous all they seemed:
The vessel swarmed with ordered movement mixed,
And the sea lived with strugglers for the shore.
Of all these only Simon had the cool
Cupidity and temerity to risk

Weighting himself with treasure to bear off
In rescue from the wreck; he his loved gold,
Ill-gotten gains of sorcery and of fraud,
Secretly carried with him safe to land.

Stephen did not lack helpers; Julius bade
Varenus, of the soldiers, serve his wish;
And Syrus, a young slave of Felix's,
Sprang of his own free motion joyfully
To help him pluck Eunicé out of scath;
For he had marked the youthful Hebrew pair
With distant, upward-looking, loyal love
Instinctive toward such virtue and such grace.
But, "Nay," Eunicé said, "not yet for me;
See there those trembling creatures" — the handmaids
Of dame Drusilla — "rescue first for them!"
On a good splinter of the tall curved stem —
The sign of Ceres at the gilded beak —
By the rude violence of the shock torn off
When the ship grounded, they tied the two slave girls;
But the shipmaster fair Eunicé's act
Of self-postponing nobleness admired,

And bade two trusty seamen help let down
That beam life-laden soft into the sea
Whither they, at the master's further word,
Followed it, as with frolic leap to death,
And brought it safely to the wave-washed shore.
Then Stephen and Eunicé, each to each
As if in a symbolic bond of fate
Linked, with a length of rope allowing play
Between them for their wrestle with the surge,
And having each in hold a wooden buoy
Provided with what might be firmly grasped,
Wieldy in size yet equal to support
Them safe above the summits of the sea,
Were lowered by eager volunteers who all
Sped them to their endeavor for the land.
They reached it and thanked God for life such prize.

The soldiers that were bidden overboard
To take their chance of swimming to the beach
Bore with them lines which, stretched from ship to shore,
Became the means of saving many souls;
The most were thus, some buoyed on floats of wood,

Some dragged half drowning through the sandy
surf,
Landed at last — forlorn, but yet alive.

Paul was not, as he had his will to be
Announced, quite last to leave the breaking bark;
Centurion Julius would not have it so.
When all except the owner of the ship
And the shipmaster and himself with Paul
(And Luke, who would not quit the apostle's side)
Were safe ashore, he intervened for Paul.
Now so it was, the mast to which was tied
The rescue-line beneath the strain gave way
And fell with a great crash along the deck.
On this those four made fast the brave old man
Who with his counsel and his cheer had saved
So many, counting not his own life dear
But seen, the crisis of the need now past,
Exhausted, tremulous, and nigh to sink.
Then having with great strength — helped by a
lurch
That now the vessel seasonably gave —
Pushed smoothly overboard the noble spar
Entrusted with that treasure of a life,

Prompt they plunged after it into the brine,
And having reached it, clung to it, and well
Buoyed up upon its surging lift, were borne
Themselves with Paul by urgent wind and wave
Safe to the beach, where those arrived before
Met them with outstretched arms and cheers and
tears.

The island of their refuge and escape
Was Melita: the Melitans were kind,
And though they spoke a tongue not understood
By Hebrew, Greek, or Roman stranded there,
And bore the name 'barbarian' from the Greek,
Yet were they alien not; in deeds they used
A universal language of the heart.
Kindling a fire, most grateful — for the rain
Fell drenching and the weather was windy cold —
Those shipwrecked strangers all they entertained.

Now so it happened that to Paul, he too
Ranging to gather fuel where he could
And fetching soon a fagot to the fire,
Sudden there sprang a viper from the heat,
Warmed from his winter dormancy to life,
And angry fastened hanging on his hand.

The islanders beholding doubted not
But here some murderer, saved in vain from death
By shipwreck, now was suffering vengeance due.
Paul lightly shook the deadly reptile off
Into the flames and felt no harm. But they,
The islanders, kept jealous watch to see
The doomed victim of those fatal fangs
Swell with the venom in his veins, or drop
Haply at once a corpse upon the ground.
After long disappointed watch, no sign
Of hurt perceived in Paul, they changed their mind
And said among themselves, "He is a god."

The chief man of the island, Publius,
Houses and lands possessing in those parts,
Gave Paul and his companions welcoming cheer
In three days' courteous hospitality—
Not unrequited; for the father lay
Wasting with fever and worse malady
In the son's house; but Paul went in to him
And prayed and laid his hands on him and he
Was healed. Then others also of the sick
Among the Melitans came and were healed.
So Paul had honors from them thrust on him;

These he divided with a liberal hand
To all, and when at last they left the isle
They went thence laden with a plenteous store
Bestowed of what they needed on their way.
But all the winter long they tarried there,
Waiting for spring to open up the sea;
And many an hour was theirs for various talk,
They fenced in sunny places from the wind
Or grouped about their outdoor fires for cheer.

The Indian Krishna, uncomplaining, bland,
With that quick quiet eye which naught escaped
And that deep-studying mind which rested never,
Had slowly by degrees, considering all
That Paul wrought or was wrought through Paul,
been won —
Against a passive incredulity
Inert but stubborn and resistant still,
The instinct and the habit of his mind —
To judge that Jewish prisoner otherwise
Than when he hearing Paul give his advice
Unasked about the conduct of the voyage
Had fixed on him the blame of meddlesome.
He owned an awe of Paul's authority

Exerted for the rescue of the lives
Of those that sailed with him; he shared the power
Of hope and courage that went forth from Paul,
His words, his deeds, and, more than either, himself.
He did not quite escape some sense, inspired
By Paul's thanksgiving when he broke the bread,
Of other presence than Paul's own in Paul
That lifted him to higher than himself.
When he saw Paul from his uninjured hand
Shake that fell viper off into the fire,
He half-confusedly thought: 'That seems not
strange;
Our Indian serpent-charmers do as much.'
But when those gifts of healing flowed from Paul,
Not singly, but in troops of miracle
Sufficing the whole island countryside,
With only prayer and laying on of hands,
Then at last Krishna said: 'I do not know,
Is there some power in him greater than he?
What power? Not Buddha, unconfessed, unknown,
Yet willingly with that large tolerance his
And bounty and sweet unconcern to claim
Acknowledgement of his gifts, working in Paul
Despite — nay, Buddha not, he long ago

Passed, and while living never power was he,
Though wisdom manifold. Yea, wisdom is,
That know I, power; but not the converse holds,
That power is wisdom; and pure power it is,
Not wisdom, that in Paul these wonders works;
No healing arts he uses, no medicine.
Whence is the power? Or what? Is Christ the
power?'

In sequel of communings such as these
Held with himself, Krishna recalled the thought
Of the rejected proffer made him late
By Paul, of Mary's story of the Christ.
He now would hear it, if but still he might;
And so one calm bright day when winter smiled
As if in dream and vision of the spring,
With proud repression of his natural pride
He brought himself to say to Paul: "O Paul,
If thy friend Mary Magdalené yet
Will deign so great a grace to me, who own
My scant desert of it, I with all thanks
Would hear her tell the story of her Lord,"
A group of those who, loving and honoring her,
Loved from her lips again and yet again

To hear the story, old but ever new,
Of their belovéd Lord, were gathered then,
With Sergius Paulus welcomed of their band
And Krishna and the kindly Julius too,
In a recess sequestered of the shore
Where the sun shining from the open south
Made a sweet warmth at noon, and whence the sea,
So capable of fierceness, now was seen
With many-sparkling wavelets beautiful
And gentle in demeanor as a lamb.

Cast in no mould of outward loveliness
To lure the eye, but of a native worth
Such that her person noble seemed, and tall
Her stature — all instinct with stately grace
Her gesture and behavior — Mary sat
That vernal winter noon amid her friends,
Throneless and crownless, an unconscious queen:
Yet over all in her that made her state
Seem regal there presided the effect,
Other and finer, of a lofty mind
Arrived through sorrow to serenity,
And in the heart of pathos finding peace.
Such, Mary; who now thus took up her tale:

"The story of my knowledge of the Lord
Begins in shadow, shadow of shame for me;
At least I feel it for a kind of shame
To have been chosen of demons their abode;
The recollection is a pang to me.
I sometimes dare compare it in my mind
With what Paul suffers"—and she glanced toward
Paul
A holy look of reverence understood—
"'Thorn in the flesh,' he calls it, but my thorn,
Within my spirit rather, rankles there,
As messenger of Satan buffeting me
Lest I should be exalted above measure—
I, to whom Christ the Lord used first His voice
Uttering that 'Mary!' when He from the dead
Rose in His glory. Surely I well should heed
How Mary, honored so, was the abode
Once of seven demons. Why this should have
been
I cannot tell, unless to humble me.
Sometimes my pride—or is it sense of worth,
Sacred and not rebukable as pride?—
Whispers me, 'Mary, thou wert therefore choice
Of demons for their dwelling-place on earth,

Because thou wert pure found and they desired
A refuge that should least resemble hell.'

"Oh, how they rent me with their revelry,
The hideous tumult of their joy in sin!
And me they mixed up with their obscene mirth,
Till half I doubted it was I myself
Foaming my own shame out from helpless lips
That blasphemed God, then laughed with ribald glee.
I was not mistress of my mind or heart;
Reason in me was a distracted realm,
And will and conscience seemed like ships at sea
Driven with fierce winds and tossed toward hopeless wreck.

"I wonder at myself that I do not
Fight against God who strangely suffered it.
But, never, never! He suffers many things
Strangely, but I, this is His grace in me,
Bow down at all of them, saying, 'Amen!'
The crown of all my reasons for believing
That God is gracious, is that I believe.
For why do I believe, except that He
Makes me believe, against so many signs

Seen in the world abroad which swear in vain
He is not good? O, ever-blessed God,
Who let those demons seven take up in me
Their lodgment, that they might be so dislodged!

"On an accepted day for me the Lord
Was passing through the city where I dwelt,
And one that knew my miserable case
Implored Him to have mercy upon me.
He heard, He condescended, and He came.
But how at His first footsteps of approach,
How did those inmates evil within me rave!
What riot, mixed of panic and despair
And hatred! The whole land elect where Christ
Upon this earth appeared, when He appeared
Was rife with insurrection from the pit
Mad in attempt against Him. So in souls
Possessed by spirits from hell, if Christ drew nigh
Outrageous spasms of futile fury raged.
Those demons seven in me usurped me now
With tenfold more abominable rape.
They with my fingers clutched and tore my hair;
Gnashed with my teeth, and flickered with my
tongue;

They frothed from forth the corners of my mouth
With foul grimace and execrable grin;
In random jaculation hither and thither
Flung my arms wildly like a windmill wrought
To ruin in a whirlwind's vortices;
Writhed all my bodily members, till I thought,
With what of power to think was left to me,
That surely nothing of corporeal mould
Had strength enough of life to suffer more."

While Mary Magdalené told these things,
Her noble face took on disfigurement
Expressive of indignant horror and shame;
And hardly had she been still beautiful
But for a pathos fine of gratitude
Tenderly crescent in it to the full,
That all was of the past, no present pain,
Naught but a memory! When her aspect cleared
And she composedly went on again,
It was as if the full moon late eclipsed
With clouds rode from amid them forth serene
In splendor, regent of the altered sky.
"Those were the pangs of my deliverance,
The throes of evil possession overcome.

'Come out of her!' He said; straight at that word,
Rending me like a travail and a birth,
They fled, and left me as one slain with wounds.
But it was a delicious sense of death.
I would be dead like that to be at peace!
I hugged the death-like trance in which I lay,
Until another word from the same voice
Made it seem sweeter yet to live indeed.
'I say unto thee, Maid, arise!' I heard
And I arose, obeying, I knew not how;
It was as resurrection from the dead,
Or first creation out of nothingness."

The Indian bent on Mary telling all
A fixed and eager heed that veiled itself,
As wont was to this devotee of Buddh,
Under a mask of face expressionless.
He quenched in silence of quick second thought
Impulses strong to speak and quit himself
Of doubts and questions starting in his mind.
He abode mute, and Mary, after pause
Filled to each one with various thought, resumed
"How glad was I, and grateful, when the Lord
Permitted me, with other women too

Healed by Him of distresses like to mine,
To follow, in the ways of Galilee,
His footsteps as He went from place to place
On His unending rounds of doing good!
He had not where to lay His head, was poor
Though making many rich; and it was joy
Unspeakable to us to minister
Out of our substance to His daily needs.
'Give to us day by day our daily bread,'
The prayer was that He taught us. God through us
Answered that prayer to Him and we were glad!

"Not all those whom he cleansed of spirits foul
Inhabiting and defiling them did He
Permit to follow with Him as they wished.
One man, perhaps as sorely vexed as I,
Being healed, entreated leave to stay with Him.
It may be there was some defect of faith,
Whence fear in him lest he, not with the Lord,
Might again be invaded by that host
Of wicked angels whom he 'Legion' called,
And Jesus out of kindness was austere,
To exercise him to a better trust
Needing not crutch of sight to stay itself.

I know not; this I know, and rest content,
He doeth all things well, His choice is wise.
The Master sent that man away, and bade:
'Return to thine own house and publish there
How great things God hath done to thee.' He went
And filled that favored city with the fame.
Who knows? It may have been a better lot,
More blesséd, to sound forth the Savior's praise
And thus prepare him welcome among men,
As did that healed demoniac, than to be,
As I was, near His person in the flesh.
But nay, nor more nor less, no difference, all
Is equal, and all blesséd perfectly,
To all that simply meet His blesséd will!"

Some subtle charm of eloquence, made up
The listener thought not how, thought not indeed
That there was any charm of eloquence—
Manner perhaps, a flexure of the voice,
Accent of clear simplicity with depth,
A strand of pathos braided into it,
The capture of an all-subduing eye—
These things in her, but more than these, herself,

Say rather the Spirit of God inhabiting her,
Made Mary speaking irresistible.
Krishna did not withstand the undoing spell,
But yielded more and more, as still she spoke:
"O, it was dreadful to behold his case,
That demon-ridden man's! No clothes he wore,
But fetters and chains instead, which could not bind
His frantic strength to hold him anywhere.
Like a wild beast in lair he lived abroad
Housed but in rocky hollows of the hills.
No man dared pass his way, so fierce was he,
Cutting himself with stones among the tombs.
When he saw Jesus coming, still far off,
He ran toward Him and prostrate worshipped Him,
Crying with a most lamentable voice:
'Lo, what have I to do with thee, O Thou
Jesus, Thou Son of God Most High? I plead
And I adjure Thee by the name of God
That thou torment me not!' For Christ had said,
'Thou unclean spirit, come thou forth from him!'
'What is thy name?' asked Jesus; and he said:
'Legion, for we are many.'

"What was strange

Then happened; for the demons prayed from Christ
To be not wholly banished from the land.
'Send us,' they cried, 'into the swine'—for near
Were feeding a great herd of swine—and Christ
Gave them their whim to enter into them.
Wherefore, I cannot tell; the Sadducees
Among our people had no faith in spirits,
Angels or demons; so it may have been
To show it no mere foolish fancy vain,
As they, the Sadducees, had taught it was,
That there are wicked beings, other than we,
Unseen and spiritual, errant in the world,
And that these sometimes truly may invade
The holy of holies of the human mind,
That sanctuary meant for God's indwelling,
And wrest it to their own foul purposes.
No Sadducee I trow had Sadducee
Remained, that saw that day the hideous rout
Made when those swine, two thousand hoofs
together,
Rushed headlong down the lakeside precipice
To perish in the waters; reason none,
Save that the demons had gone into them.
It was not sudden assault of epilepsy;

"Those swine at least did not imagine it all!"—
Over the face of Mary speaking now
A moment of sarcastic humor played—
"A woman herself possessed, then dispossessed,
Of demon inhabitants, may be forgiven
A little natural scorn to be assured
That she was only shaken in her wits!"
And Mary so recovered with a smile
The sweet and holy candor of her face.

But now an interruption—for there came
Rudely, from Felix sent, a minion who,
With little Felix following him, to Paul
Drew nigh and said: "My master bids thee come,
For Simon whom he honors has fallen sick,
And he would have thee heal him." Summons such
Delivered in curt wise so insolent,
Betrayed the master through the messenger.
"Go tell thy master that I come," said Paul;
"Go thou, but leave the lad to come with me."

So Paul took little Felix by the hand,
He well-pleased equally to stay or go
In that benign companionship, and went.
But first Paul said: "Perhaps the afternoon

Already is far spent enough, the cool
And damp of evening will draw on apace;
To-morrow, if God will — and Mary please —
Our hearing of her tale may be renewed."

They, thus dispersed, and slowly following, saw
Paul like a guardian angel in the guise
Of a serene old man and venerable
Lead on the boy and heed his prattling talk.
He had the ruffled spirits of his friends,
Indignant all at Felix's affront,
Composed with only his superior pure
Detached Christ-like serenity and calm.

BOOK XIV.

MARY MAGDALENÉ.

Paul declines to undertake the healing of Simon at Felix's request. But Simon had first refused to suffer Paul's access to him, at the same time warning both Felix and Drusilla of the evil likely to result to their little son from a touch to him of Paul's hand which the sick sorcerer had just observed through the lattice. Felix and Drusilla, freshly angered at Paul, resolve together on his destruction. A second meeting assembles to hear Mary's story. This time there is an interruption occasioned by a disturbing written message from Felix, sent to Julius the centurion, one of the listeners.

MARY MAGDALENÉ.

When one set high, but hopeless gross in grain
Of nature — and through habit of license long
And self-indulging pride of place and power
Grown grosser — by reverse of fortune falls,
And can no longer wield his insolence
So widely as his wish were and his wont
Has been, then often he will salve himself
That sore-felt loss of brutal privilege
By being more insolent still where yet he may:
So Felix now wreaked his revenge on Paul.
Paul knew him powerless, but he would not turn
Retort on the humiliated man,
Or aught abate toward him the obeisance due
The ruler that he lately was — a strict
Respect enforced by his own self-respect.

Felix had with fair princely promises —
Commended to those simple islanders
By large report of recent royal state
His and of prospects brighter yet at Rome,

As by Drusilla's airs of queen — made shift
To lodge himself commodiously with his train:
Under his roof apart Simon lay sick.

"Thou hast heard doubtless what I would from thee" —
So without greeting Felix said to Paul —
"Thy trick of healing for a gentleman
I have the humor to regard with love.
A fellow-countryman of thine he is,
Something too of a fellow-conjurer" —
And Felix grinned at his own pleasantry;
"He has fallen sick in this accurséd place.
'Physician, heal thyself,' thou wilt say to him,
For, aye, he is helpless for his own relief.
Heal him; thou shalt not unrewarded go.
I think that I can serve thy cause at Rome,
Where there is need greater than thou wouldst guess.
For they love justice there so well they sell
It high; great sums, money in hand, they want;
Or preferably sometimes they will commute
For other things than money still dearer to men.
A mighty mart is Rome; they barter there

Justice for pleasure, pleasure in various kinds,
Most of it such as thou couldst not provide —
Unless indeed thy pretty countrywoman — "
But a sharp spearthrust look, shot forth from Paul,
Sudden as lightning and as branding bright,
Broke that word off, and Felix faltered on
With forced resumption of his insolence:
"A good round price they ask, whatever the kind.
Have me for friend at court and thou shalt thrive.
Simple and easy; make this gentleman well,
Nothing but that; just a few mumbled words,
A magic touch of hand, presto, all's done.
What thou art *giving* to these wretches here,
These beggarly Melitans, with no reward
Except the fun of seeing them jump for joy,
Look, I am *purchasing* from thee at great price.
But stay, thy patient has not yet been told
What thus is planned for him. Let me prepare
Thy way a little, ere thy task thou try."

When Felix entered where the sorcerer lay
The peevish sick man was the first to speak:
"That Paul had little Felix by the hand;
Just now I saw him through the lattice here.

It is an evil hand, beware of it.
Its touch brings certain mischief where he will,
And that toward thee and thine he will, be sure."
Felix was startled, but he cheerily said:
"Go to, I was just bargaining with Paul
To have him use his laying on of hands
For thee, good Simon. Cheer thee up, my man;
We shall soon have thee out of this." But he:
"Paul shall not touch me, shall not look at me.
I fear him, and I hate him; out upon him!"
"Listen to reason, Simon," Felix said;
"Thou canst not doubt he really works strange
cures;
There was the father of Sir Publius,
And scores of sick among this native rabble
Have come out whole from under those same hands."
"It served his turn," piped Simon. "It shall serve
No less his turn to heal thee," Felix said;
"I have made it his account to play us true."
"Hark thee, my master, for this word stands fast,"
Said Simon, rousing halfway from his bed,
"I will have none of Paul; I will get well
From spite, rather than have those hands on me."
And Simon moved in act as if to rise;

But Felix stayed him still his bed to keep.
Then, thwarted, he returned to Paul, and said:
'He will not let thee lay thy hands on him,
A fit of foolish stubbornness, he fears
Thee, or pretends he fears; he certain hates
Thee, no pretence. Well, he is right perhaps;
You fellow-Jews ought to know one another.
But *I* would trust thee, Roman as I am."
(Vaunting his Roman franchise Felix thus
His clinging freedman's quality betrayed);
"That is, safe pledge in hand, thou understandest,
Such as I hold, thou knowing well thy life
Hangs on my word for thee at Rome; *would* trust
Thee, nay, I trust thee, Paul, and thou shalt yet
Despite this worthy's Jewish contumacy,
Heal him, ha! ha! without his knowing it.
Put him to sleep, thou canst; thou hast the drugs
Doubtless will soundly do it; compound them thou,
And I will undertake he swallows them.
Then thou canst fetch thy passes with the hand
At leisure over all his ailing frame,
And heal him — joke as it were at his expense!"

Paul had stood listless with his eyes downcast
And with his heart withdrawn from what he heard,
And Felix had felt effect that penetrated
Yea even his triple mail of insolence
And dashed him sore ; he had rallied all his force
Against it to maintain his tone assumed
Of falsely-festive brutal cynicism.
Helplessly dumb he hearkened, while Paul replied :
" Lord Felix cannot know the grace of God,
Whereof mine is but trust and stewardship.
My power of healing is not mine, but God's ;
I have it, not to use it as I will,
But as God wills, who shows His will to me.
I dare not, would not, use it otherwise,
I could not, He would take it away from me ;
Would not continue it rather, for it is
Dependent momently on His immanent will.
I had no hint from Him as of behest
That I accomplish thine announced desire.
I might have promptly sent thee back such word
By thine own messenger ; but I had seemed
So to be wanting somewhat in the heed
Due to thy station ; I therefore came myself
To tell thee, O lord Felix, to thy face,

That I am servant of the Most High God,
Subject as such to no man's bidding, thine
Or other's, and not free to mine own choice.
Yet so I half misrepresent myself,
For to mine own choice I feel wholly free,
My choice being His who works in me to choose.
Toward Simon, although he love me not, I bear,
God is my witness, no ill will; instead,
Would I could serve him! and perhaps I might,
I know not, were his heart but right with God.
Let him renounce his ways of wickedness;
God to all men is good who will repent.
But His face is as fire not to be quenched,
Wrathful, devouring to the uttermost,
Against all, no respect of person, who
Strengthen themselves in their iniquity.
None shall escape at last, although, because
God's judgment is a while delayed, they may
Dream that it never will descend on them.
Delay is but forbearance, not neglect;
God's goodness leadeth to repentance; woe,
Woe, yea, and sevenfold woe, alight on those,
All, who despise that grace of God in Christ!"

No shudder of terror swept over Felix now,
As when that wave of trembling shook him so
At Cæsarea in the judgment hall.
He recognized an echo in Paul's words
Of what he heard that day from those same lips
And then thought dreadful. 'Strange,' he dully mused,
'How moments of weakness sometimes find out men!
Why should I then have feared, and naught to fear,
Save words, mere words? Solemnly spoken, aye,
And I could not but hearken to the man,
Majestic in his gesture and austere.
Even now I sit and listen to the voice,
But I am fenced and mailed that it hurts not.
Would that I felt but half as safe from Rome!'

So Felix in a half unconscious sort
Heard Paul's words then hollow and meaningless;
Only rebounded from them to the doubt,
The hateful haunting doubt, of what lay hid
Within the horizon of this present world
For him; deaf, since that day of final doom,
To Sinai thundering from the world to come!

Two witnesses had witnessed that which passed
Thus between Paul and Felix: secret one,
Eavesdropper from behind a hanging nigh,
Felix's jealous and suspicious spouse
Drusilla; one in open view, and frank,
Observant while obtrusive not, well-poised
In sense of self-effacing loyalty,
Young Stephen, shadow of his uncle Paul.
He, as of course, fulfilling duty, went
Wherever his illustrious kinsman went,
If aught of peril to him, or need, could there
By watchful love be guessed. Paul now by Stephen
Attended from that alien presence forth,
Drusilla from her hiding burst, and cried:
"A Jewish mother's curse fast cling to Paul,
False, renegade Jew, who has his cursing hand
Folded on little Felix's this day!
Heed Simon, and beware of Paul. O, why,
Why didst thou, couldst thou, think of summoning him,
Hated of all his nation so, to blight
The hope and fortune of our shaken house
With creeping leper's plague upon our boy;

Or perhaps other mischief worse than that!
O, Felix! Felix! O, my lord, my lord!"

Such woman's wailing and upbraiding broke
All the man's force in Felix to withstand.
He joined his imprecations upon Paul
And swore her ready oaths to work him woe.
Then as the pair conspired in vengeful vows
Against him, mutually to each other pledged,
"With that young cub of his too," Felix said,
"Fair-favored as he is, a meddlesome lad,
Following his greybeard uncle round about
With spaniel looks and watch-dog carefulness;
And our friend Sergius Paulus, understood!"

Simon made good his threat of getting well,
And fostered and fomented all he could
The viperous hatch of hatred against Paul.
Stephen reported to his company
The incident and the spirit of the scene
Beheld by him enacted between Paul
And Felix; and all knew full well the dark
Presage of consequence for Paul it bore.

A little more deeply shadowed in their mind,

Pathetically hopeful yet in God,
They met next day again, as had been planned,
In the same spot with the same weather still
Prolonging that winter interlude of spring,
When Mary thus her broken-off tale resumed:
"The wonder of the works that Jesus did,
Wonderful as they were for grace and power,
Was less than of the words that Jesus spake.
'Spirit and life' these were, as Himself said.
Once I remember, near Gennesaret,
On a green grassy mound which swelled so high
That mountain even it meetly might be called,
Sitting Him down as on a natural throne
Of kinglike gentle state, there, with the waves
Of that bright water kneeling at His feet
And the blue cope of sky canopying His head,
He His disciples round about Him drew
And taught us of the coming kingdom of heaven.
'Blesséd the poor in spirit,' He began,
'For unto them belongs the kingdom of heaven;
Blesséd the souls that mourn, for in God's time
They shall be comforted; blesséd the meek,
For theirs the heritage of the earth shall be;
Blesséd the souls ahungered and athirst

For righteousness, for they shall yet be filled;
Blesséd the merciful, for mercy they
In turn shall find; blesséd the pure in heart,
For they God's face shall see; blesséd, who make
Peace among men, for they shall thence be called
Children of God; blesséd, who for the sake
Of righteousness shall persecuted be,
For unto them belongs the kingdom of heaven.'"

"I cannot," interrupting so herself,
Said Mary, "cannot ever make you know
How like a heavenly-chanted music flowed
The stream of these beatitudes from Him.
The lovely paradox of blessedness
Pronounced upon the persecuted, seemed
So like the purest, simplest reasonableness,
When those unfaltering lips declared it true!
All things seemed easy and certain that He said;
Certain, yet some things awful and austere;
As when in that same speech with altered strain
He sternly spake of judgment and hell-fire;
It was as if the mount whereon He sat,
Verdurous and soft, were into Sinai turned,
And muttered thunder. But when with a change

And cadence indescribable He said:
'Love ye your enemies, and them that curse
You, bless, do good to them that hate you, pray
For them that use you only with despite
And persecute you still, that ye may be
The children of your Father in the heavens,
For He His sun maketh to rise alike
Upon the evil and upon the good,
And without difference sendeth rain upon
The just with the unjust. For if ye love
Them that love you, what have ye for reward?
Do not the oppressive publicans the same?
And if your brethren only ye salute,
What more than others do ye do? Do not
The oppressive publicans likewise? But ye,
Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is:'
And then when, closing, with authority
He said: 'Whoever heareth these sayings of Mine
And doeth them, I will liken him to one
Who wisely built his house upon a rock;
The rain descended then and the floods came
And the winds blew and beat upon that house,
And it fell not, being founded on a rock:
And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine

And doeth them not, he shall be likened to one
Who foolishly his house built on the sand;
The rain descended then and the floods came
And the winds blew and beat upon that house —
It fell, and mighty was the fall thereof;'
When thus, I say, He tempered His discourse,
Sweetness and awfulness were blended so
In His majestic and benignant mien
As never yet I knew them — never until
They met and kissed each other at Calvary.
That," Mary with a look toward Krishna said,
After a pause of reminiscence mute,
"That was when Jesus died upon the cross."
"Tell me of that," said Krishna answering her,
Forgetful for an instant of reserve;
Then added with self-recollection swift:
"But all in order due, or as thou wilt,
For I am debtor to thy courtesy,
And I shall listen fain to what thou sayest,
All, and however thou shalt order it.
I find thy Master's doctrine sweet to hear,
And partly not unlike our Buddha's strain."
"Perhaps our guest, if I may name him such,"
Downcast toward Krishna turning, Mary said —

"Most welcome we all make him, I am sure,
To this our simple hospitality
Of converse or of audience, wherein I
Seem to be bearing here a part too large —
Perhaps," repeated Mary, "now our guest
Will tell us something of his master Buddha"—
She therewith resting, as to yield him room.
"Another day, if I may choose, for that,"
Said Krishna; "pardon me my hasty word,
And pray thee let thine own tale choose its way."

Then Mary: "It were sad to tell the end,
How Jesus died, save that He afterward
Rose gloriously, and that before He died,
In prospect near of dying, He spake words
So gracious and so full of victory!
How well we know it now; but, alas, then
Our hearts were holden and we did not know!
Strange that we did not know, for oft he said,
Oft, and in many ways, remembered since,
That He would die and after rise again.
Yet, at the last, when He of dying spake,
Our hearts were charged with sorrow, and when He
died

Our hearts, they broke with sorrow and with no hope.

"O, it was beautiful, most beautiful—
It seems so to the backward-looking eye,
Which sees it now, when all is over and done,
The shame and sharpness of the cross gone by,
And He safe sitting in the glory of God—
Beautiful and pathetic beyond words
(Pathetic still, though all be over and done,
Secure the issue and blesséd), the way in which
Our Savior faced His future welcoming it,
That future with its unescapable cross,
Its mystery of His Father's smile withdrawn!
For truly, though our Lord by faith foreknew
The end beyond the seeming end, the dawn
To be after the shadow of the night—
The dawn, the day, the everlasting day!—
Yet horror possessed His almost-drowning soul
Of that which He must suffer ere the end.
Peter and James and John told us of how,
Alone of all companionship, retired
From them even whom He had chosen to be with Him,

He, in the garden of Gethsemane
At midnight of the night before the cross,
Prayed, and in agony great drops of blood
Shed as in sweat, desiring with desire
To have the cup removed that He must drink.
It could not be, it was not, dread of death,
Though painful and though shameful, shook Him
so—"

So Mary, swerved to sudden wonder, said,
And question in her look as if for Paul.
Paul answered: "Nay, oh, nay, not dread of death;
That cup how many, finite like ourselves,
Have taken and quaffed with overcoming joy
In martyrdom for truth! Some mixture worse,
O, unimaginably worse! to Him
Embittered His inevitable cup,
That He, beyond His human brethren brave,
So shrank from drinking it. His was to bear
As Lamb of God in sacrifice, the weight
Of the world's sin. This crushed Him sinless down
Immeasurable abysses into woe,
The woe of feeling forsaken by His God.
Supported by believing in the joy

Far set before Him He endured the cross,
Despising the shame, and is in sequel now,
We know, and love to know, at the right hand
Of God His Father throned forevermore,
There waiting — He, inheritor of the name
Exalted high above whatever name,
The name of King of kings and Lord of lords —
Until His footstool all His foes be made."

"Amen!" in fervent chorus, Krishna heard
Break, soft and solemn, from the lips of all,
With Mary, who then thus her tale renewed:
"Before His passion in Gethsemane
And on the cross loomed nigh enough to Him
To cast its solemn shadow deep and dark
Over His prophet mind and over us,
We had been walking joyous through the land,
Green flowery land it was of hill and dale,
With flocks and herds, and villages of men,
The land of Galilee, gushing with springs,
And spreading fair her lake Gennesaret,
Now placid a pure mirror to the sky,
Anon tumultuous, if rash wing of wind
Swooped down upon it from the mountain shore —

We had been walking through this lovely land
With Jesus, He, like sower gone forth to sow,
Scattering His gifts of healing everywhere
Broadcast about Him as He passed along;
Or sometimes feeding the great multitudes
That, like to sheep having no shepherd, thronged
His way, feeding them freely from a hand
That multiplied the bounty it bestowed;—
It was like journeying sphered with journeying spring
Created for us where we set our feet;
Our hearts were garlanded as for festival,
So gladsome was it to behold our King
Advancing in such progress through the land
And lavishing such largess on His poor.
But largess of beneficence from His hand
Was nothing to the largess from His lips
Of wisdom and of grace and of good news—
To the obedient; the rebellious He
Judgments and terrors dire announced against
That fastened and kindled like Gehenna fire.
I was baptized with shuddering but to hear
The woes leap living from those holy lips—
Which then nigh seemed to smoke like Sinai top
With indignation—on the Pharisees,

The Sadducees, the lawyers, and the scribes,
Unworthy found and judged for hypocrites.
Most fearful as most fair theophany, He!
One looked to see them flame, as lightning-struck,
Those cities of people that rejected Him,
Bethsaida, Chorazin, and that proud
Capernaum, when on them His woes He launched,
Hurtling them from His mouth like thunderbolts.

"To ears fresh wounded from such frightful woes,
How balmy and how healing were these words
Cadenced ineffably from those same lips:
'Come unto Me, all ye that labor, ye
That heavy laden are, come ye, and I
Will give you rest. My yoke upon you take
And learn of Me, for meek and lowly in heart
Am I, and ye rest to your souls shall find.'

"With invitation or with warning He
Or with most sweet instruction heavenly wise,
Our soul, our senses, feasting thus, the while
He wrought too with that easy omnipotence
His manifold mighty miracles of grace,
We walked long time with Jesus; how long time
I know not, for the days and weeks they came

And went unnoted and the seasons changed.
But at last He, how shall I say it? became
Almost a different being from Himself.
He spake of a mysterious hour, 'Mine hour,'
He called it with some solemn meaning, what,
We could not or we did not then divine,
Couched in the word; that hour was now drawn near.
It seemed to frown upon Him imminent
And cast a somber shadow on His face.
He dreaded it, and yet He welcomed it,
Hasting the more to meet it as it neared.

"We were afraid of Him, with a new fear,
He looked so awful in His loneliness.
For He no longer with us walked; He walked
Before us, hasting to Jerusalem.
How steadfastly His face was thither set!
He as if saw the features of His hour
Coming out clearer and clearer, and always there!
He now would oftentimes His chosen twelve
Take from the rest apart to tell them how
The Son of Man, oft so He named Himself,
Should be delivered up to the chief priests

And to the scribes, and be by them condemned
To death; and how the Gentiles in their turn
Should mock Him and should scourge Him and
should spit
Upon Him and should kill Him; then how He
Should from the dead the third day rise again.
But they those sayings understood not then,
So simple and easy afterward, though strange.
Like a refrain recurring in a song,
Some sad refrain that lingers in the ear
Persistent through whatever else is sung,
So did these doubtful boding prophecies
Again and yet again, not understood,
At intervals return amid the strain
Of other teaching opulent and sweet
That flowed and flowed in changes without end,
Unending, from His lips. And all the while
Were miracles and signs, as by the way
And little reckoned, dropping from His hands
Like full-ripe fruit from an unconscious tree!

"And so it came to pass that we at length
Were nigh to Bethphagé and Bethany.
Here resting, to a village opposite

Our Master sent to fetch an ass's colt
Appointed for His use, one virgin yet
Of touch from human rider to his back;
Thereon the lowly King sat Him to ride.
How little did what we saw follow look
Like the fulfilment of ill-boding words!
For now the people flung their garments down
Before Him in the way, they branches strewed
From trees on either side to keep the feet
Of even that ass's colt which He bestrode
From touching the base ground, the while a shout
Went up, one voice, from the great multitude
Before Him and behind Him where He rode,
'Hosanna to the Son of David! Lo,
Blesséd is He that cometh in the name
Of the Lord God! Hosanna in the highest!'
How little then to us, blind eyes, it looked
As if this march triumphal of our King
Was to a death of shame upon the cross!"

With wondering interruption Julius asked:
"But how, but wherefore, was it thus? No crime
Had Jesus done; and what suspicion even
Of crime intended by him could there lie

In any mortal's mind against a man
So wise so pure and so beneficent
As he was in the obvious view of all?"
He added: "I could understand how some,
Offended at his stern rebuke of them
Before the people, might in secret wish
His death, might plot it, and might compass it,
By private means of murder; but how one
Like Jesus should fall under law, be tried
In open forum as criminal, be found
Guilty, be sentenced, and be put to death,
All as in process due of justice, *that*
I cannot understand, that baffles me.
And under *Roman* rule and government!
For crucifixion seems to mean so much.
Perhaps some reason of state demanded it:
Justice must often yield to reasons of state."

"A reason of state," said Paul, "was the pretext,
And but pretext it was, the real ground not.
With deep hypocrisy my nation came
And pleaded to thy nation against Him
Pretension on His part to be a king,
Saying, 'We have no king but Cæsar;' so

Falsely affecting loyalty to Rome,
And therewith falsely too attainting Him
Of treason in purpose to dispute with Cæsar
His claim of worldly lordship over them.
Thy nation, Julius, with full equal deep
Hypocrisy, believing the charge no more
Than they believed who brought it, washed its hands
Vainly of guilt, condemning innocent blood.
Jew joined with Gentile, Gentile joined with Jew,
In one conclusive act of wickedness,
That the whole world at once might before God
Be guilty of the death of Christ His Son;
Our sin it was that slew the Lamb of God!"

While the centurion hung confounded, dumb
With silence that half conscience-smitten seemed,
Pondering Paul's words, charged, heavy charged, with blame
Involving him too in complicity
Of guilt with the whole world for Jesus' death —
A messenger from Felix came once more;
This time to Julius with a letter sealed.
Julius, unready for intrusion such

Upon that moment's privacy of thought,
With petulant gesture broke the seal and read
These brusque words, which, though writ with other's hand,
Were self-shown straight from Felix's own heart;
No salutation, and no signature,
Ambages none of complaisance or form,
Frank unrelieved mock-kingly insolence,
Drusilla's phrase, but spirit Felix's:
"Does it become a Roman officer
Honored with grave responsibility
As thou art for the custody and safe
Conduct of arrant criminals to Rome,
To be consorting with the chief of these
In affable familiar intercourse?
How thinkest thou? If report were brought to Rome
Of such acquittal of the office thine,
Would it seem well? Dost thou judge nothing at all
Due from thee to the dignity of trust
Received from the august imperial hand?
Is such thy measure of the faith required
In one of Cæsar's deputies? Or thou
Perhaps at heart art Christian: ask thyself
If thine be a *religio licita!*

Apostate from the emperor to Christ
Am I to recognize in thee? Judge then
What duty will demand from me arrived
At Rome, me who am loyal still to him,
Nero Augustus Cæsar named with gods!"

These things read Julius with a knitted brow
That discomposure with resentment showed;
Then mastering himself to courtesy
Wherein some air of condescension played,
He made his peace by gesture without word,
And slowly, like one doubting, went away.

With nothing said or signed to set in light
The meaning of the message thus conveyed,
Paul from the person of the messenger,
Well-known a slave of Felix's, divined
The meaning mischievous, but kept his thought
And only said: "With the centurion now
Our guest no longer, and the day so far
Declined from its meridian, meet perhaps
It were to let our interrupted tale
From Mary — thanks to whom once more we owe —
Rest till to-morrow, if to-morrow be
Ours, and the weather then still smile as now:

God will still smile, through weather fair or foul.
And now to God our Father blessing be,
From whom all blessing is, and to His Son,
And to the Holy Ghost. Amen!"

"Amen!"
They echoed all, with not even Krishna mute;
Then silently and solemnly withdrew.

BOOK XV.

YOUNG STEPHEN AND FELIX.

Drusilla has a confidential conference with Simon the sorcerer, now recovered, though still weak. He tempts her to think of ensnaring the emperor with her charms. He insinuates into her mind the idea of making away with Felix on the ground of his being an obstacle in her path to success. With this in view, he forms suddenly a plot to convict Felix in his wife's eyes of infidelity to herself. He easily awakens Drusilla's jealousy, and she, with her own motives, enters into Simon's present proposals. Eunicé is accordingly invited to visit Drusilla as one repentant and desirous of being a Christian — Felix having meantime been filled by Simon with the notion that Eunicé is enamored of him, Felix. She comes with her mother to Felix's house, and the two are there entrapped; but at the crisis of danger they are rescued by young Stephen.

YOUNG STEPHEN AND FELIX.

That bland sweet weather changed to truculent
At sunset, and through all the winter night
Raged with wild wind and sleet of rain and hail.
The roofs, the doors, the casements, of the house
Where Felix and Drusilla sojourned, shook
As toward dilapidation of its frame.
Drusilla lay in terror of her life
Tossing upon her couch and could not sleep.
Brief intervals and lulls of tempest came;
But images of distant danger then
Mixed with the imminent menaces of the night.
So with the earliest morning — furious yet
The unabated rack of elements —
Drusilla sent for Simon, rallied now
Out of his low estate, and, tremulous
With weakness, through that very weakness made
More searchingly clairvoyant than his wont.

Untimely roused, and unrefreshed with sleep,
And shaken as still she was with panic fears,
The Jewess, ever conscious of herself

And proudly the more conscious now before
One whom she fain would hold her vassal, sat
Like a queen giving audience, well-arrayed,
Yet artfully in speaking seemed to plead.
"Simon," she said, "be once more my resource."
"Not once more, but an hundred hundred times,
Liege lady," Simon said, "if mine art serve."
"But, Simon, *will* it serve for no reward?"
Drusilla, not without some pathos, said;
Yet also not without some scrutiny
Of Simon, which that deep dissembler bore
Flinching, but scarcely flinching, as he said:
"My fortune I account bound up with thine."
"Yea, Simon, what through thee I gain," she said,
"Reckon that thou no less gainest through me.
As has been, is, our pact; art thou content?"
"More than content, most thankful," Simon said;
"I pray thee of conditions now no more,
But speak thy wishes; they shall be commands."
"Well, faithful Simon," wheedling now she spoke,
"That proud Drusilla thou once knewest in me,
Is abject in sheer sense of helplessness.
My lord is broken in spirit with lack of hope:
I stay him up, as best I may, to show

The world some front of kingly boldness yet,
But truth is, I am broken with staying him.
What can we do at Rome? How mend our case?
Friends have we few, and on the fallen thou knowest
Enemies swarm like flies on rotting flesh.
All is for sale at Rome, but who can buy
That goes barehanded thither, as do we?
Thou hast the truth; now, Simon, like the rest,
Leave us, as rats forsake a doomèd ship!"
"Thou pleasest to be facetious, O my queen,"
Said Simon; "thou barehanded never art,
Go where thou wilt, with beauty such as thine,
Such beauty, and such wit to use it well."
With pregnant ambiguity he spoke,
And deeply read the features of her face.

Those features molded nobly fair, but now
Through their disfiguring discomposure wronged,
Slowly regained the aspect clear and calm
Wherein the proud possessor long before
Learned that her sumptuous beauty best prevailed
To make her sovereign of the hearts of men:
Habit, with reminiscence of her past
Triumphs, usurped her mind that she forgot

Simon, the raging storm, her doubts and fears.
Simon considered his mistress at his ease;
He saw she was not flattered by his words
To be a childlike plaything in his hands;
He saw she was too haughty to resent,
Too haughty to acknowledge by word or sign,
Perhaps too haughty even to recognize
In her deep mind, much more in heart to feel,
Hint as conveyed by him in what he said
That in the marriage markets of the world
Such charms as hers were merchantable ware;
And that he Simon abode at her command
Loyally ready to renew for her,
On some august occasion still to seek,
That intermediary office his
Which once from King Azizus parted her
To make her of the Roman Felix spouse.

Drusilla in no manner made response;
But not less Simon knew his wish was sped;
He knew the Venus Victrix heart in her
Was flattering to the height her sense of power.
He could not err by over-audacity
In tempting this presumptuous woman's pride.

He ventured: "It were loyal service done
Thy husband, to whom loyal service thou
Already even to sacrifice hast done
In being his consort, thou a queen before,
And he"—'but lately raised from servile state,'
Simon would fain have said outright, to ease
The pressure of hate and scorn he felt for Felix,
But knew he must no more than thus arrest
That word upon the point of utterance caught—
"It were I say, well-weighed, a service to him
If thou shouldst wake the matchless power thou hast
Of kindling admiration and desire,
To exercise it in supreme assay
At the tribunal where he must be judged,
Making the judge himself thy willing thrall!"

The subtle sorcerer watched with wary eye
Askance, to see his mistress give at this
Some sign of pleased and startled vanity:
Impassible placidity he saw—
Serene, withdrawn, uninterrupted muse.
A little disconcerted, he bode mute,
Half glad in hope that he had not been heard.
When at length she, that queenly creature, broke,

Herself, with speech the growing spell of awe
He felt upon him cast by her supreme
Beauty suspense in its august repose,
Its silence and reserve and mystery,
Then Simon knew that she had been before
Him with the soaring thought of Nero led—
The emperor of the world in triumph led—
A captive at Drusilla's chariot wheels!
A flash of light invaded Simon's mind:
'Were there not hidden here the way long sought
To free himself from the abhorréd yoke
Of Felix? This bold woman would not stick
At putting such an obstacle as was
A husband such as he, out of her path—
This by whatever means—a path that led
Steep to enthronement by the emperor's side.'
Thenceforward Felix's worst foe was one
Of his own household at his table fed.

"The emperor is a bloody man, if true
Be all, be half, that they report of him—"
Drusilla thus, as in soliloquy
Rather than in discourse to ear addressed,
Spoke slowly—"he, the latest story goes

Sped like a shudder of horror around the world,
Has got his mother slain, bunglingly drowned
By accident forsooth, at his command —
Accident such as asks design to chance,
A vessel foundering in a placid sea,
On a serene and starry summer night —
And after all not drowned, even awkwardly,
But rescued to be stabbed, with mother's cry
First from her lips, 'I never will believe
This of my son!' but then with, 'Strike me *here!*'
Confessing that she knew it was her son!
And his young queen Octavia, silly sweet,
And good, and pure, and fair, and amiable,
And in short all a Roman emperor's spouse
Should not be — she, they say, leads a slave's life,
Or worse, amid her husband's palace scorned,
And happy if at last only with death
And not with shame he rid her from his side '

Thus speaking, his bold mistress, Simon knew,
Called up deterrent thoughts so formidable,
Not to succumb before them shocked, appalled,
But to confront them fairly, know them well,
Then with defiance triumph over them.

Still, with slant thrust at Felix in his thought,
He dared a word of double-edged reply:
"Emperors, and those however now ill-placed
Yet worthy to be empresses, are free
To seek their consorts, consorts true I mean,
Wherever they can find them in the world;
And obstacles must not be obstacles
To them; their pathway must somehow be cleared.
Such, one may all too easily judge amiss.
Wait till thou see the emperor fitly wed!
That emperor-mother Agrippina balked
Her boy too often of his wish. She would
Be empress of the emperor of the world;
Her blood in him made this impossible:
It was her folly and crime invoked her fall.
As for that young Octavia — thou hast said."

"Poppæa"—so Drusilla had resumed,
But Simon rashly took the word from her:
"Poppæa is a rival to be weighed
Doubtless — highborn, and beautiful, and deep
In cunning, and sure mistress of herself —
As art not thou too, and full equally? —
But then she has a husband in the way,

And is *she* of the stuff to deal with *him?*"

Simon's hatred of his lord had pricked him on
Beyond the mark of prudence; he recoiled
From his own words before Drusilla spoke,
And added, for diversion of her thought:
"But doubtless thou wilt need to buy thy way
To opportunity at Rome; betimes
Prepare thee bribes to drop along thy path.
Our Gentile brethren have a pretty tale"—
And Simon with sarcastic humor leered—
"Of how a runner once upon a time
Won him a famous race by letting fall
Gold apples on the course too tempting bright
Not to delay his rival gathering them.
Provide thyself with apples of gold to drop,
While thou art speeding featly to thy goal."
"Gold, Simon!" Drusilla said, "thou teasest me,
Too well thou knowest I have no gold; our store
Was swallowed all in that devouring sea."
"I speak in figure, my lady," Simon said;
"I mean neither literal apples nor literal gold."
"Pray, no more parable to me," severe
With air resumed once more of queen enthroned,

Drusilla answered, and, with only look,
As haughtily disdaining further word,
Demanded that he make his meaning plain.
Simon, with indirection sly, replied:
"Hast thou remarked the daily opening bloom
Of beauty in the face, and in the form,
Of that Eunicé, our young countrywoman?"

Drusilla gave a fiercely jealous start —
On Simon, eagerly alert, not lost,
Brief though it was, and instantly subdued;
It was as instantly interpreted —
A welcomed effect, though calculated not.
She had recalled what late she overheard
Hinted from Felix to the prisoner Paul,
"Unless indeed thy pretty countrywoman"—
And construed it as meaning that his eye,
Her husband's, had been levying on the maid.
"Women are not like men to note such things,"
Drusilla answered with a frigid air,
Yet not as with unwillingness to learn
What sequel there might be in Simon's thought.
That sequel Simon changed to suit the case
He had now created unexpectedly.

He would torment Drusilla's jealous mind,
And whet her temper to the proper edge
For helpful quarrel with that spouse of hers
So hateful to him.

"Women that are wives,"
Said Simon, "well might condescend to pay
Some heed to such things! But the present need
Is to have bribes in hand of the right sort
To lavish where occasion may arise
When we reach Rome. Try if thou canst not gain
This pretty damsel for our purposes.
Play patroness to her, have her at court
Here — for wherever the true queen is, there
Is court, though in a desert — flatter her,
And ply her to thy will. Arrived at Rome,
Where all is venal yet venal not all for gold,
Offer her as likest seems to serve thy cause.
There is my scheme for thee; and thy lord will,
I doubt not, wink at least to forward it."
Simon could not forbear the tempting chance
To end, as he began, with what would bait
Further Drusilla's flushed and jealous mind.

'Is Simon playing me false in a deep game

To serve lord Felix at his wife's expense?'
Drusilla wondered; 'would he dare so far?
Does he even seek to make a tool of me?
Of me, Drusilla, make a pliant tool—
I serve their turn forsooth against myself?
Be it so, and let them trow their plotting speeds!
I will try to be as simple as they could wish.'
In secret with herself she wondered thus;
But spoke aloud with cleared and brightened look:
"The storm, I see, which I had quite forgot,
Thanks to the charms of thy society,
Is much abated; let us break our fast,
And then go thou and bid her hither to me,
That pretty child. Tell her I need her much,
For I am deeply sorry for my sins,
And think that, with a little guide like her
To take me by the hand and lead me right,
I could forsake them all and follow with her
Henceforward, a true sister in the faith.
A little lure of harmless simple hope
To win a wicked woman from her ways,
I think thou wilt find useful with the maid,
If, as is likely, she be loth to come."

Felix, Drusilla, and the sorcerer
That morning at their simple meal reclined
Together in a show of amity;
But inwardly it was a state of feud
Or hollow truce of armed hypocrisy.
Eating in silence with small appetite,
Their breakfast soon they ended; Simon then
Withdrew and did his errand. He did more;
For having perforce to meet the mother too,
Whose daughter was seen ever at her side,
He feigned to be himself a penitent,
Protesting his belief that he was healed,
Unworthy to be healed, because Paul came
But near him where he lay sick in his bed;
And this although he had wickedly refused
To see Paul and to suffer Paul's hands on him.
He said his mistress was afraid, as he
Was too, of Felix; both of them must move
Warily, no suspicion to excite
In one so irritable and so violent.
They therefore could not ask for Paul to come,
Or indeed any *man* among Paul's friends.
But Ruth might safely come and bring the maid
Her daughter. Simon begged the matron would

Kindly indulge Drusilla's preference,
Caprice perhaps it was, for making her child
And not herself — senior, and so more wise
Doubtless — her chosen guide and confidant.
Eunicé's youth had won Drusilla's heart.

All Simon's plausible art could not prevail
To gain from Ruth the promise he desired;
She only told him she would ponder well
What he had said and do as wisest seemed.
But Simon, cheering himself that in the end
Ruth by the tempting bait held out to her,
The hope of doing good, would be enticed,
Went straight to Felix, and with many a wink
Of sly salacious import hinted to him
That he, his master, had quite unawares,
With just his manly martial front and port,
Taken captive a fair Hebrew damsel who,
If all sped as he hoped, would soon appear
There at the mansion, by her mother led,
To feed her fancy on his noble looks.
The simple mother, she knew nothing of it,
But came to visit Drusilla in the hope,
Which, naughty child! the daughter had inspired

Of gaining my lady over to the faith.
Should Felix condescend to speak to her
The maid would be all blushes, that of course;
She coyly would insist she only came
Bearing her mother company to wait
Upon the mistress of the house with her.
Felix would understand how much was meant,
Or rather how little, by the pretty airs
And arch pretexts of feminine coquetry.

It was as Simon hoped: Ruth, overcome
In prudence by her generous desire
To serve a soul in need; some natural zeal
Perhaps commingling to bring home such spoil
Of her Eunicé's winning, a surprise
And joy to Paul and all the rest — so led,
Ruth with Eunicé to Drusilla went.
But not alone; Stephen their counsel shared,
And he, deeply misdoubting of it all,
Went with them. In the inner court he stayed,
Awaiting watchful, eye and ear, while they,
Having with all obeisance been received
And ushered inward by the instructed slave,
Should do their errand with the mistress there.

He was disturbed, when Felix, with a scowl
Askance at him, crossing the court in haste
Followed the women through the selfsame door,
Scarce shut behind them ere he entered too.

It was of her astute design and art,
Drusilla's, that her husband should have scope
To show at full in act before her eyes
What ground of truth there was for Simon's hints
Against his faith to her. She had hid herself,
Not to be seen but see, while in the room
Whither the women were ushered Felix might,
Were such his mind, waylay the pretty maid,
Proving himself what Simon would have him be.

"Thou with thy daughter, madam, art well come;
These are dull days in Melita for us,"
So, with a gross familiar air ill masked
In mock of supercilious courtesy,
Felix to Ruth; who noticed with dismay
That servitor and servitress at once,
As if at silent signal unperceived,
Vanished from presence and left her alone,
Her and Eunicé, no Drusilla seen,
With Felix and his bristling insolence.

Her fears were not allayed when Felix said
Further: "My lady will be glad to see
Thee, madam, for she dies of weariness
In this insufferable place, with naught
Of new to while the endless hours away;
But as for this our pretty little maid,
She shall accept my awkward offices
To entertain her, while her mother waits
Apart on dame Drusilla and chats with her."
So saying, he stepped to the half-open door
And clapped his hands in summons for a slave.
One quickly answered, and the master said:
"Where is thy mistress? Take this madam to her,"
Pointing to Ruth.

Ruth in a whirl of thought
Wondered, 'Are these things all a wicked wile
Of Simon's to entrap us here? Does she,
Drusilla, too, collude? Or does she know
Nothing of all? Or, knowing, does she fear
Felix, and therefore leave us helpless thus?
How far may I abiding true to her
Involve Drusilla in a plea to him?'
She stood, not stirring at the servant's beck,

And spoke in tones held clear and firm with will:
"It is my daughter, sir, the errand has
With dame Drusilla. She shall go to her,
And as the custom is between us twain
We will together go, for twain with us
Is one. Dismiss us, then, I pray, to go."
"Thou art hard-hearted, madam," Felix said;
"One surely is enough to meet the dame
Drusilla, and the other might solace me.
I pay my lady's taste a compliment
In myself choosing for my company,
As seems she chose for hers, thy daughter fair
Rather than thee; for, without prejudice
To thine own comeliness, thy daughter is,
Thou wilt confess it, madam, nay, with pride,
A trifle fresher in her youthful bloom."

Eunicé standing by her mother glowed
With an indignant shame sublimely fair;
It kindled up her beauty into flame
Dreadful to see, had he who saw it been
But capable of awe from virtue shown
Lovelier with noble wrath; Felix admired
Only more fiercely and was not afraid.

A flash of movement instant changed the scene.
Stephen, who, through the door left open, caught
Felix's first ominous words of insolence,
Had, winging his feet with his suspicious fears,
Fled out into the open — whither, scarce thought —
Yet with instinctive wish that went to Paul.
He chanced on Aristarchus walking nigh,
In solitary muse, after his wont;
Him, with such instance as spared needless words,
He hurried forth to find and fetch back Paul.
Returning he dashed swiftly through the court,
Avoiding who perhaps with servile sloth
Reluctant might have moved to stay him there,
And through the door where his Eunicé was
Defenceless in that ruthless robber's den.

The youth's ear, quivering quick with jealous love,
Snatched Felix's last words, his ravening eye
Seized on the splendid vision of his bride
Betrothed, gleaming there in her loveliness
Illumined so with virtue and with shame
Beside her mother, facing such a foe!
His instinct was far swifter than his thought;
Counting not odds, not deeming there was odds,

He like an arrow from a bow that twanged
Shot into place between his bride and him,
That spoiler, and there stood. His face he turned
Defiantly on Felix, lightning of scorn
In sheafs of flashes shooting from his eyes,
Distended his fine nostrils with disdain,
His right arm raised in gesture to forefend,
And his light frame a-quiver with repose
Of purpose to dare all and to prevail.

It was a duel of silence betwixt those twain,
That slender youth through whose translucent flesh
Blushed the bright blood of innocence and truth.
That burly man corrupt in every vein
With the thick fœcal currents of debauch.
Ruth and Eunicé would not cower or cry:
Eunicé's spirit partook of that high strain
Which was her martyr father's, and she now
Triumphed to see transfigured to more fair
Than ever with his glorious hardihood
The youth that worthily bore her father's name
And worthily held the empire of her heart.
In confidence of Stephen which subtly too

Wrought to make him more confident of himself,
Eunicé stood confronting the event.

Felix succumbed and was the first to speak:
"Well, youngster, thou hast struck an attitude!
What wilt thou? And what doest thou here?
Knowest not
Thou beardest thus the lion in his lair?"
Felix's air of pride and lordliness
Was ever such flatulent swell of windy words.
Stephen some space disdained him loftily
With dumb and blank refusal of reply;
Then grudged him this: "I into the wolf's den
Enter to rend the ravin from his paw."
The youth thus having spoken half-way turned
Toward the two women and with instant voice,
Low-toned yet less to be inaudible
To Felix than for intimate passion of love,
Said: "Haste, fly! I will follow as I may."

Ruth with Eunicé had not reached the door
When, frantic to be balked of his desire,
Felix lunged after them with lusty stride
Seeking to stay the damsel in her flight.
For all her fear she still forbore to cry,

But could not check her impulse of appeal
To Stephen, and she uttered forth his name.
The eager agile stripling had no need
To hear that call from his belovéd; he,
Already at her side, had, with clenched fist,
Which flashing like a scimitar came down,
Smitten Felix on the forearm with such might
That for the moment it was numbed with pain,
And dropped as palsied from its reach for her.
Eunicé with backhanded movement quick
Seized, as she flew following her mother forth,
On Stephen's girdle behind her and drew him,
Willingly led in that captivity,
To share their flight and rescue from their foe.

Beside himself with rage at his defeat,
And aching still with pain from Stephen's blow,
Felix now stamped and shouted: "Slaves! What, ho!
Rascals, where are ye all?" Some, trembling, came,
But ere their master could possess his wits
To give them orders, Paul before him stood.
Worse crazed at that sight, Felix fiercely cried:
"Him! *Him!* Are ye all blind? Seize *him*, I say!"

Betwixt their terror of Felix and their awe
Of Paul, august in his unmovéd calm
And venerable with virtue and with age,
Well-known to them besides as one who wrought
With other power than mortal, the poor slaves
Hung helpless to perform their master's hest.
"These do not need to seize me, here I am,"
Said Paul, "and of no mind to fly; I came
Hastily summoned as to some distress
Here, what I know not, that I might relieve."
"Smite him upon the mouth," Felix broke forth,
"And make him *feel* distress to need relief!"
The freedman's truculence waxed with every word,
And swaggering forward he his hand upraised
As if himself to strike the blow he bade;
When, with a maniple of soldiers armed
Accompanied, Julius the centurion stood
Abruptly at the door.

Stephen with his charge
Had met the band of soldiers on their way
Just as, with circumspection looking back,
He saw Paul, by a different path arrived,
And earlier, enter at Felix's abode.

He quickly acted on a counsel new.
For, with a farewell of, "Now ye are safe,
Yet hie ye to the uttermost remove
From Felix," to the women spoken, he
Turning walked back with Julius who his pace
Now slacked to listen while the stripling told
What had befallen and how he feared for Paul
Imperilled in that violent house alone.

"Come in good time, however hither called,"
Felix to Julius said, with such a tone
As seemed to ask how he was thither called.
"Thy servant Syrus begged that I would come,"
Said Julius, "for the safety of thy house
Endangered by two women and a boy,
Who had found entrance and were threatening thee."
In truth, that sly young slave of Felix's —
For reason ill-affected toward his lord,
As much enamored of the Christian folk
For their fair manners, and the comely looks
Of some of them, and the beneficent
Working of wonders seen or heard from Paul —
Had summoned Julius in the true behoof
Of Ruth with her Eunicé and of Stephen;

This, shrewdly under guise of service shown
His master. Julius understood the guile
And humored it, while Felix's thick wits
Spread ample cover to render Syrus safe.
"Of course," so Julius added, "it had not seemed
Needful to come, but that I also heard
A prisoner of my charge would here be found,
For whose safe keeping I am answerable."
Then glancing in a kindly neutral way
At Stephen, he, with show of grave rebuke
That could not wholly hide his lively sense
Of whimsical humor in the part he played
As mediator in such case, went on:
"This Hebrew youth confesses that, in haste
Of spirit, he offered thee some disrespect."
With language purposely made light and vague
Thus the centurion glozed Stephen's offence,
Discreetly shunning to let Felix know
That *he* knew from the offender's own report
How, for good cause, as to a happy end,
The indignant youth inflicted on him there
The shame and anguish of that timely blow.
"What wilt thou, my lord Felix," Julius asked,
"Wilt thou forgive the lad outright? Or pleasest

Thou rather *I* condignly deal with him?"
It was astutely so proposed, to save
Appearances *to* Felix and *for* him.
Gross-witted as he was, he yet was proud,
And such end of the incident appeared
At once some homage to his dignity
And an escape unhoped from threatened shame.
He condescended loftily to leave
The case of Stephen in the centurion's hands;
And the centurion presently retired
With Paul and Stephen both. Stephen he bade
See to it that he never thenceforth act
Less worthily of himself than he that day
Had done, and with no other reprimand
Dismissed him to rejoin his company.

As for Drusilla, she now had her proof;
And seeing his purpose prosper Simon was glad.

BOOK XVI.

INTERLUDE OF KRISHNA.

Publius, the governor of the island, who in gratitude to Paul for the healing of his father has opened his house to the Christians for their meetings, now expresses, through Sergius Paulus, his guest, a wish to hear himself the story that Mary Magdalené is relating. The company accordingly assemble in his house, and Publius is in courtesy asked to act as a kind of master of the feast. He accepts the part, and discharges it with much urbane demonstrativeness. Interrupting Mary at one point of her story with exclamations of surprise and pleasure, he proposes to Krishna that he offset what has just been told with something parallel from the life of his master Buddha. Krishna reluctantly complies, when, after some comment following from Paul, Mary resumes her narrative.

INTERLUDE OF KRISHNA.

For many following days in Melita
There was no season of hospitality
To man from Nature under open sky,
Genial for ease and comfort out of doors.
But the fair spacious halls of Publius
Stood smiling ever ready to entertain
Resort of Paul or any dear to Paul
Whether for social worship in prayer and psalm,
With hearing of Paul discourse of things divine,
Or for communion sweet of friend and friend.
Here presently were gathered yet again
The company that had with one accord
Already twice assembled to give ear
To Mary Magdalené while she told
Her story still unfinished of the Lord.

Publius, as Roman to his Roman peer —
And Roman peer so versed in all the arts
And all the accomplishments urbane that make
Amenity in companionship — had said
To Sergius Paulus (likewise, for his sake,

To Krishna), "Pray thee, honor thou my house,
And be content, abide with me a guest."
Now Sergius had to Publius rehearsed
The things that Mary those two afternoons
Recounted, and the Roman lord would fain
Hear from her lips the rest. So he was there —
Guest in a sort, while host, at his own hearth —
And Sergius Paulus said:
"O Publius, thou —
Most welcome, as thou makest us welcome here —
Shalt, so it please thee, us all it will please,
Be the feast-master in the present feast
Of story and of audience. Krishna here" —
And courteous toward the Indian Sergius bowed —
"Has also a story to tell us of his lord.
Whether with alternation and relief
Between our two historians, or in course,
Till one have finished, be the order best,
Judge thou for all, and all will grateful be."
"Let Mary Magdalené then go on,"
Said Publius, "if she will, from where she ceased
At the last audience;" and he turned to her
With, "Sergius has most kindly made me know
So far thy story, madam, with the rest

Of this good company. But, with thy peace,
And with the peace of Krishna and of all,
I will upon occasion interrupt —
For haply the occasion may arise —
To ask what contrast or what parallel
To this or that of Jesus, Buddha yields."

So Mary, with some heightened flush like shame
To speak in this new place and presence, yet
Sedately like herself and with a charm
Already round her ambient from the pure,
The perfect, the accomplished womanhood
That hers was, purged of self, charm by all felt
At once ere her beginning, thus began :
" I think that I was saying, as my words
I stayed at our last gathering on the shore,
How little like a tragedy so nigh
It looked to us, when we beheld the throngs
Strewing Christ's way before him with their robes
Flung down, and with green branches of the palm,
And shouting their hosannas to His name.
But Jesus was not blinded as were we !
He, on the brink of the descent arrived
Steep from the Mount of Olives leading down,

Beheld the holy city with its sheen
Of splendor from the temple roofs and walls,
And, far removed from glorying at the sight
As king might welcomed to his capital,
Wept over it, with much-amazing tears,
And cried: 'Hadst thou but known, but known,
even thou,
Yea, even in this thy day but known the things
That to thy peace belong! But they are hid
Now from thine eyes. For days will come on
thee—'
And then such dreadful days he told us of—
Days which our holy apostles think are nigh,
Whence their 'Maranatha!' so often heard,
Reminder watchword of the Lord at hand,
They solemnly adjuring by the days
Reserved for our Jerusalem, a wrath
To come upon her to the uttermost
Then when He, with the angels of His power,
And as the lightning shineth suddenly
Ablaze from one end to the other of heaven,
Shall back return in clouds to execute
His judgment on the city that slew Him!"

"But wherefore," the centurion asked once more,
And Mary with a loyal look toward him
Of honor for his kindly courtesy
That day and ever bountiful to them —
Look too betokening welcome of his return
To share the audience of her tale again
Late interrupted by that message brought
Seeming to be of sinister import —
Mary, with such a meaning so conveyed,
Paused, while the friendly Roman plied his quest:
"But wherefore did Jerusalem desire
To slay one innocent of crime like him?
Some reason of state I dared to guess there was,
But what the reason of state, thou didst not tell,"
Turning to Paul he said, and Paul replied:
"The Jewish rulers of the people said:
'This Jesus, if we let him thus alone,
Will draw all men to follow after him;
The Romans then will come and take away
Alike this city which belongs to us,
Yea, and the nation over which we rule.'
The rescued remnant of authority
Wielded by the chief priests and Pharisees
Over our nation under Roman sway,

This still was dear to them and this they feared
To forfeit if the fame of Jesus grew."

"And grow it did surpassing even their fears,"
Mary resumed, at silent sign from Paul;
"For but a little while before, and nigh
Jerusalem, a height of miracle
Jesus had wrought. One four days dead, nay, one
Already four days in his sepulcher,
Our Lord, with only 'Lazarus, come forth!'—
Commanded in loud voice before the tomb—
Summoned to life again. The dead came forth
Bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his
head
Bound with a napkin round about—no pause,
Not of an instant, in obeying that word,
Prevention none felt from impediment.
Abrupt descent then from such miracle
To the plain level of sobering commonplace.
For he whom Jesus from the dead could call
To leave his tomb, to stand upright, to walk,
Unconscious of obstruction, swathed about
With grave-clothes though he was, must be released
By others from his bonds; the Master said

To those near by, 'Loose him and let him go.'"

While Mary told these things, a sense diffused
Of something felt by all the Christians there,
Felt, but acknowledged not in word or sign,
Signalled itself despite to all the rest;
And through a kind of dumb intelligence
It came that Publius, Julius, and that deep
Discerning Indian, Krishna, with one mind
To all, unspoken, fixed inquiring gaze
On Rachel and on Stephen, who their hands
Meantime had silently, unconsciously,
With simultaneous mutual movement clasped,
As if in token of some memory
Which they that moment felt between them rise,
Some sacred memory, some undying love.
Then Mary, with the happy instinct hers
Of what was fitting to be said, and when,
And what more fitting to be left unsaid,
And how to say all, or how silent be,
Assuming, with a look of deference
First toward the twain, their present leave to
speak—
Granted to her as so much trusted in

For wisdom, and for love in wisdom poised—
Said, with a certain courtesy implied
For Publius as the master of the feast,
And for the others needing to be told:
"That Lazarus, raised by Jesus from the dead,
Is to the Christians of this company
A name the dearer that to two of us
He is the dearest memory of their lives.
For after he had risen from the dead
At Jesus' call he lived his human life
As he before had done, till in due time
A husband and a father he became.
But Rachel lives in honored widowhood,
As, with her, half in orphanhood lives Stephen,
Because he after fell asleep in Christ
To be waked only when Christ comes again."

A tender pause succeeded, which all filled
With solemn, some with wondering, thought; and then,
Tempered, beyond his will or consciousness,
To a contagious mood of sympathy,
Publius most gently as feast-master spoke:
"The height of miracle well calledst thou

Such summoning of the dead to life again;
For greater wonder were not possible.
To see it, as thou sawest it, was a gift
Indeed from the supernal powers; next is,
To have it in report of one who saw it;
And then, for attestation of thy word,
Where attestation surely need was none
Yet serving for attestation, to behold
Here those who knew the dead man raised to life
As husband and as father — all makes seem
The story like reality itself.

"And now," to Krishna turning, Publius said:
"O Krishna, pray from thee a parallel.
What comparable wonder wilt thou show
That thou hast seen thy master Buddha work?"

The countenance fell to Krishna hearing this,
But quickly himself recovering he replied
"I am not able out of all I know
Concerning Buddha aught this day to tell
As one that saw and heard; I never saw,
I never heard, lord Buddha act or speak."
"Then from report that some eye-witness gave
Thee, speak and tell us what thou wilt, and we

Will be therewith content" — so Publius, dashed
A little from his lively hope, but fain
To ease the discomposure of his guest.
But Krishna, in no wise more cheerful, said:
"Nor from eye-witness have I aught received
That my lord Buddha either said or did:
He lived and passed five hundred years ago."

"But doubtless some memorials," Publius said,
"Were written by eye-witnesses of him,
While he still lived, or close upon his death,
To keep so dear a memory alive
And certify it to all aftertime.
So, out of such memorials known to thee,
Fresh still, though old five hundred years, because
Then written when the images were fresh,
Imprinted on the writer's mind of things
He either saw or heard himself from Buddha —
Strange virtue has eye-witness testimony
In simultaneous records of the time
To stay, though old, perennially young —
I say, then, out of such memorials stored
And treasured up in mind to thee speak thou,
And it shall be to us as if thou hadst seen."

Publius, with all sincerity of aim
To hearten Krishna and make most the worth
Of that which he, although eye-witness not,
Nor yet reporter from eye-witness known,
Should proffer to that hospitality
Of audience touching his dear master Buddh,
Had unawares confused him more and more.
For the first time the Indian felt give way
A little, melting underneath his feet,
His standing-ground of settled certitude:
'Was it all quicksand? Nothing there of rock?'
But he made answer: "O my courteous host,
All is uncertain, for tradition all,
Concerning times, and order of events.
Indeed, we Indians care not for these things,
But trust full easily, or, not trusting, yet
Rest as if trusting, in much unconcern
Whether that which we learn be wholly true,
Or partly not; and yet I have heard it said
That, close upon the passing of the Buddh,
A council of five hundred faithful met
Who said together in accord complete —
No sentence varying, nay, no syllable —
The mighty mass of all the Exalted One's

Instructions; but no writing then was made,
Nor again afterward an hundred years,
When such rehearsal came a second time.
So, truth to say, where all is doubt — for me,
I fear there was, for half five hundred years
After he died, no record in writing made
Of what our master Buddha wrought and taught.
Save for those synods of rehearsal met,
That precious memory lived precariously,
As himself lived, the master, vagabond
And mendicant from loyal mouth to mouth.
But such tradition was too vital to die;
Compact of only vocal breath, it still
Persisted and would still for aye persist
Though never at all in written record sheathed.

"But the fourth part of a millennium
After lord Buddha died, a synod sat
Of his discreet disciples, who decreed
That then at least a record should be framed
In writing of the master's deeds and words."

"Most fit," said Publius, who to complaisance,
His impulse and his habit, now adjoined
A certain willingness not unamiable

To magnify the twofold part he played
As host and as symposiarch, and make cheer
All that he could for Krishna; "aye, most fit;
And doubtless they were men, that synod, famed
For wisdom and for virtue; name them thou,
Or at least some, the chief, that we may here
Honor them for their worth."

But Krishna said
(For, by some sense of disadvantage stung,
He took reprisals of his gentle sort):
"What if I could not name them? What if they,
Concerned less to survive themselves in fame,
Mere empty wraiths of sound to mortal ears
In futile issues of dissolving breath,
Repeated echoes of unmeaning names—
What if, I say, concerned less so to be
Vainly themselves remembered for a day
Than to keep living for the use of men
The saving truths their master Buddha taught,
Those saints and sages of the elder time
Let themselves perish quite from human thought?"

But Publius interposed, insisting, fain
To show some ground of reason in his mind,

Beyond mere curiosity for words,
Why he desired to know those ancient names.
"Yet were it some support" he said, "to faith
In those same saving truths as truly saved
Themselves for men, after so long a term
Of vagabondage (to take up thy word),
Of vagabondage and of mendicancy—
The fourth part of a thousand years consumed
In flying forward hither from mouth to mouth—"
So far, uncertain of his way, he groped;
Bethinking then himself of one more chance,
That might be, of the proof he sought, he said:
"And still, O Krishna, if those nameless ones,
Deserving well to be not nameless, nay,
Of far-renownéd name; nor less, but more,
Deserving that they waived their own desert;
If these — nobly not mindful whether they
Remembered or forgotten were of men,
Yet heedful not to let the coming time
Fail of the truth that they themselves had found
So dear, or dwell in any needless doubt
Of its just phrase — committed at the last
The task of fixing it in written form
To some illustrious man who would consent

To forego for himself his choice of being
Obscure, unknown to aftertime, and lend
The great weight of his name to the result,
For satisfaction to inquiring souls —
Why, that were much, indeed perhaps enough,
And I before required beyond my right."

Demand upon demand sincerely so
Urged by the genial host upon his guest
As if urbane concessions granted him,
Involved the patient Indian more and more.
Pressed beyond even his measure now at length,
He brooked no longer to allow the toils
To multiply about him which he felt
Were fast entangling him to helplessness.
He boldly spoke to disengage himself:
"We of the East, O Publius, are not such
As you are of the West. We do not count
The years as you do, fixing fast our dates.
We live content a kind of timeless life
That moves continuous on from age to age
Unreckoned. Countless generations come
And go, and come and go, like forest leaves
From year to year, and no one takes account

Of those more than of these. Why should we?
Those,
As these, are ever to each other like,
Harvest and harvest endlessly the same.
What profit were there in a history,
What history indeed were possible,
Of either leaves or men? Let leaves and men
Together to oblivion go; be sure
There will not fail to follow leaves and men
To fill the places never vacant left.

"But then we Easterns are yet otherwise
Different from you; for we remember more.
Because we do not write our records down,
We all the better keep them safe in mind.
Doubtless we mix them much with fantasy:
We are not nice to draw a certain line
Between what we remember and what dream.
All is as dream to us, for we ourselves
Are dream, and oft imagination wakes
Where memory sleeps; but, so the form be full,
Somehow, somewhence, it matters naught to us
Whether from fact it be, remembered right,
Or half from fancy fitted to the fact.

Our Buddha is the fair ideal man,
Exemplar of the human possible.
We cannot dream him fairer than he is,
Or was — for he perhaps is not — and so
We fling the rein down on our fancy's neck
And let her freely take her own wise way.

"I will not warrant you the truth of it,
That is, the insignificant truth of fact,
Mere fact, but if the deeper truth of fit
And fair will answer you, I can relate
The story of one miracle of Buddh,
The sole one of the Sutta Pitaka,
That chiefest treasure of our sacred texts.
This, though to raising of the dead no match,
Yet, to my mind, is meet and memorable,
For that therewith a lovely word is joined
Of tuneful teaching from the master's lips."

"Let us have both, the wonder and the word,"
Said Publius, and the Indian thus complied:
"'The Blesséd to the sacred Ganges came
'And found the stream an overflowing flood.
'The others looked for boats and rafts to cross,
'Or else wove wicker into basket floats;

'But he, as quickly as a strong man forth
'Would stretch his arm, or his arm being stretched
'Would bring it back, so quickly at his wish,
'Had changed the hither for the thither side.
'There standing, he the wicker-weavers saw,
'And thus broke forth in parable and song:
'"They who traverse the ocean of desire,
'"Building themselves a causeway firm and good
'"Across the quaking quagmires, quicksands, pools,
'"Of ignorance, of delusion, and of lust,
'"Whilst the vain world its wicker baskets weaves —
'"These are the wise, and these the saved indeed.'"

A pang of suffering love and loving ruth,
For Buddha himself, long quit of earthly strife,
But more for Buddha's disciple present there,
Shot through the heart of Paul hearing these things.
He sighed in spirit heavily, but said,
When Publius seemed to seek a word from him:
"If I have taken the Buddha's sense aright,

He means that they the happy are and wise
Who find a means of ceasing from desire
And entering into passionless repose,
A state from death itself scarce different.
Contrariwise taught Jesus: 'Blesséd they
That hunger and that thirst;' that fan desire
To all-consuming flame of appetite —
But it must be for righteousness they pant.
Not from desire, but from impure desire,
To cease — that is salvation; and we best
Cease from impure desire when we to flame
The whitest fan desire for all things true,
For all things honorable, and all things just,
For all things pure, and all things lovely, all
Of good report, and worthy human praise.
Passion for these things, being pure passion, burns
The impure passion out: but passion such
Is kindled only at the altar fire
Of the eternal God's white holiness.

"No God find I in all the Buddha's thought —
A ghastly gap of void and nothingness,
O Krishna, to the orphaned human heart
That aches with longing and with loneliness,

A weanling infant left forlorn of God,
And, 'O, that I might find Him!' ceaseless cries
In yearnings that will not be pacified,
Fatherless in a dreadful universe!
I would thy Buddha had felt after God,
And haply found Him, or been found of Him!
I wonder if, not knowing it, he did!
Sadly I wonder when of this I think,
That he who comes to God must needs believe
God is, and a rewarder is of such
As diligently seek Him — such alone.
But may one seek God unawares? With hope
I wonder, when I think again of Him,
The Light that lighteth every soul of man
That anywhere is born into the world.
O Christ, Thou Brightness of the Father's glory,
Immanuel, God with us, the Son of Man,
The Son of God, God Himself manifest
On earth to us, Redeemer, Brother, Lord!"

The strain of such ascription bursting forth
Unbidden, and unboundedly intense
In tone, from the great heart of Paul surcharged
With passion of devotion to his Lord

And with vicarious travailing desire
To save men, wrought in all who heard an awe
Of immanent God. But Krishna to the quick
Was touched with tenderness toward Paul to hear
Paul's tenderness toward Buddha, far removed
Although it were from reverence like his own.

To Publius there seemed no fitting thing
For modulation to the mood from Paul,
Save to let Mary now resume the word.
She said: "After the raising from the dead
Of Lazarus, we disciples of the Lord
Ought not to have been astonished or dismayed
At anything that in His wisdom He,
His wisdom and His power, might either do
Or suffer to be done. But we were blind,
And it did seem to us so violent,
So opposite to all that should have been,
When He, that Lord of life and glory, let
The soldiers take him prisoner. At first
Indeed, when He stood forth and said to them,
'Whom seek ye?' and they, ignorant, said to Him,
'Jesus of Nazareth,' and thereupon
He answered, 'I am he,' they, at that word

From Him, majestically spoken more
Than they could bear to hear and stand upright,
Went backward and fell prostrate on the ground.
This, as I think, was not so much *against*
Those who thus suffered as *for* us who saw —
To reassure our faith that naught then done
Was done without His sovereign sufferance, who
Such things could, then even, and so easily, work.

"But I have told now what I did not see,
For it was midnight when this came to pass —
Deep in the garden of Gethsemane,
A little paradise of olive trees
Where oft the Master loved to be retired;
A few disciples only were with Him there,
His chosen apostles; and not all of these,
For one of them a little while before
Had gone out from among them — well foreknown
By Jesus wherefore, it was to betray
His Lord and Master to His enemies!
Judas, the name of this one was, and he
Had given it for a sign to those that sought
To lay hands on our Master, 'Whomsoever
I kiss, that same is He; make sure of Him.'

So Judas, as in all sweet loyalty,
Came up to Jesus with his proffered kiss
Of salutation; but the Lord would not
Receive it, till He had first made known to all
His understanding of its treachery:
'Judas,' He said, 'betrayest thou with a kiss
The Son of Man?' When Judas had his sign
Given, he fell back among the band he had brought.
Then was it that the Lord asked them, not yet
Enough assured or haply stunned with fear,
'Whom seek ye?' and declared Himself to them.
So Judas was of those who prostrate fell
Recoiled before the glory of the Lord
Flashing in sudden glimpse from out the shame
Like lightning disimprisoned from a cloud —
Foretasted retribution of his crime!
Thus much not as eye-witness I relate,
But having heard it from eye-witnesses
So many and so close upon the time
That half it seems as if myself had seen it.

"I saw when, with the breaking of the dawn,
After a night to Jesus of such strain
And pain in agony and bloody sweat,

And sorrow of heart for human traitorhood,
And disappointment in his hopes from friends,
And dreadful bodings of the doom so nigh,
And being rudely hustled to and fro
Between one jurisdiction and another,
Everywhere treated with all contumely
Both of accusing and reviling word
And of gross act in blasphemous affront
To the image of God in man — were He but man! —
But He being God, conceive the blasphemy
Of spitting in that heavenly human face
Divine, and smiting Him in mockery,
Blindfolded not to see whence came the blow,
Then bidden prophesy, 'Who struck thee, Christ?'
(The very slaves there smote Him with their hands) —
I say that after such a night to Him
Who condescended to be human, God
Although He was, and felt all human woe,
I saw when, morning having broken, they
Led Jesus last to Pilate in his hall.
There He stood lamblike, so pathetical
In His meek majesty I could have wept
For heart-break in sheer pity of His state,
But that the fountain was dried up in me

Of blesséd tears, and I consumed myself
In anguish that fed on my soul like fire."

The anguish whereof Mary spoke that fed
So like an inward fire upon her soul,
Seemed to surge back on her in memory;
And it was after strong recoil subdued
That she resumed to say: "Ye will not ask
That I tell all again, how shame on shame
Was wreaked upon my Lord, until no more
Was possible from men. Pilate himself
(Now Pilate was the Roman governor)
Pilate himself, I think, was moved to pity,
Though, paltering, he with cruel weakness bade
Scourge that sweet human flesh and temple of God!
Perhaps he thought, 'This will content his foes.'
So having done, he, issuing from his hall,
Brought Jesus forth before the multitude
Wearing upon His brow a crown of thorns
The soldiers had in mockery plaited Him,
And over his bruised form the purple robe.
'Behold the man!' said Pilate to the Jews;
I think he must have had his hope to meet
Relenting on the part of that wild mob

When they saw Jesus in His piteous plight.
Bloodthirsty as they were, perhaps they would,
With the blood streaming from His wounded brows,
They knowing besides how underneath the robe
Mock-kingly that he wore the blood coursed down
The trenches opened by the cutting lash —
With so much blood they might be satisfied.
Nay, so much blood but maddened them for more.

"'Behold the man!' said Pilate, and I looked.
I knew that He was more than man, and never
Did He the human measure more surpass,
Yet man He was, and so divinely man!
The God in Him, apparent like the sun
To me, made Him not less, more rather, man.
I worshipped Him, and yet I pitied Him!
I never pitied other half so much.

"He was so exquisitely human! Our
Little capacity of suffering pain,
Whether of spirit or of flesh, in Him
Seemed to be carried to unmeasured heights.
What form of anguish ours did He not feel?
Yea, sorrow for sin not His; 'Which one of you,'
He asked once, and no hearer made reply,

'Which one of you convinceth Me of sin?'
Sinless He was, nor ever felt remorse,
That worm which dieth not prey on His soul.
Yet somehow He became so one with us
He felt our sin as if it were His own,
His own to bear in undeservéd woe
Suffered on our behalf, worse than remorse.
All this I blindly felt seeing Him there.
He did not mail Him proof with hero pride
To suffer as if He suffered not, and so
Wrest their vain triumph from His enemies.
They saw Him suffer more than any man,
Not quailing indeed, yet hardening not Himself.
'Never man spake like this man,' some one said;
I say, suffered man never so as He.
How my heart bled for Him when Pilate spoke
Those words, 'Behold the man!' And Pilate too,
I pitied him. Pity, with worship blent
Into one overmastering passion, poured
Out of my heart toward Jesus; but toward him,
Pilate, that weak, that wicked, went instead
Pity with horror, doubtful which was more.
Forgive me that I mix myself with this.

Indeed I could not tell you all in all
My story, not another's, of the Lord,
Unless, besides the things I saw or heard,
I told you also how they seemed to me,
What thoughts, what feelings started in my breast."

The purged high passion with which Mary spoke,
Calm though she kept with costly self-command,
Betrayed itself to Paul observing her.
He knew the tension of remembered pain,
Imagined with such vividness of recall
That well-nigh Mary suffered it all afresh,
Had touched already the extremest bound
Of what that spirit, in its shaken shrine
Of frail flesh quivering so, could safely bear.
He spoke and said: "O Publius, there is much
Remaining still for Mary to recite
Of the last things to Jesus here on earth,
Both His obedience faithful unto death,
And His victorious rising from the grave.
So thou, feast-master of the hour, consent,
Let us — thine own urbane feast-mastership

Resumed then — meet, if God will, yet once more
To hear this solemn history to the end."

Such word from Paul was mastership transferred
To him; and Publius promptly, without sense
Of yielding, yielded and broke up the feast.

BOOK XVII.

THE STORY OF THE CROSS.

When the company next assemble, Publius greets them with a feast spread in his house. This gives occasion for his explaining the customs of his nation in the matter of recognizing various divinities at feasts. Paul replies, setting forth the Christian doctrine on this point. Mary, in due time about to begin her narrative, is seized with a sudden faintness, which however soon yielding to restoratives supplied by Ruth, she goes on and relates the incidents of the crucifixion of Jesus.

"'Feast-master,' ye were pleased to call me,
friends:"
So in a cheerful humor Publius spoke,
Bright-hearted welcome radiant on his face
As vibrant in his brisk and cordial tones,
Then when by concert after interval —
Their appetite the keener from suspense —
The selfsame company again were met
Under his ample roof to hear the rest
What Mary, or what Krishna, more might tell.

They found the mansion furnished as for feast.
Garlands of fresh leaf and of fragrant flower
Hung everywhere about and frolic laughed
A momentary mimicry of spring.
A fountain playing in the court without
Shot up its curving column to the sun;
He caught the shattered capital in air,
And, kindling every crystal water-drop
Of all the circling shower to which it turned
Into a jewel, sent the largess down,

Shifting as in a shaken kaleidoscope
From form to form of light and rainbow hue —
A glittering evanescence passing price,
Sard, topaz, sapphire, opal, diamond-stone,
Emerald and ruby, pearl and amethyst.
That fountain, to the eye refection such,
Plashed gentle-murmuring music in the ear.
Couches and chairs about the board disposed
Awaited. The guests' feet, as they reclined,
Or sat — the woman sat, the men reclined —
Were duly washed and wiped after the wont
Of homage in those times and in those climes
Accorded ever to the honored guest.

While this was passing, the complacent host,
Not in quite unpremeditated words
Though from his heart, welcomed his guests and said:
"'Feast-master' ye were pleased to call me late
When of your own ye furnished forth the feast,
Invisible viands, yet of savor rare.
Then I was helpless, taken by surprise,
And could do nothing to deserve my name.
If, by your grace, I must feast-master be,

Let me in some sort be feast-maker too.
Forewarned to-day, I venture to assume
Leave of your goodness, and provide this cheer;
Too obvious to the sight and touch and taste
To be as delicate as yours, yet fruit
Of hospitality sincere. Partake,
I pray you, freely, and commend the food.
With meat and drink refreshed, we shall not less,
More rather, relish what of nobler sort
May follow, entertainment to the mind."

Paul answering with a grave sweet courtesy
For all attuned that genial atmosphere
To a chaste spirit of something finer yet
Than genial, which prepared him easy way
To saying: "And now, O Publius, unto God
Most High, who gave thee what thou givest us,
And gave thee likewise thy good will to give,
That God in whom we live and move and have
Our being, who of one blood made us all,
Gentile and Jew together, and whose Son
Christ Jesus died that we might be redeemed
To fellow-sonship with Himself to God —
Let us to God, All-giver, render thanks

For these his gifts, and therewithal for that,
His gift unspeakable in Christ His Son."
So, Publius assenting with bowed head
And complaisance unspoken, Paul gave thanks.

"Oblation of the lips in chosen words,
Warm from the heart no doubt yet only words,
O Paul, thou offeredst to the powers unseen
Above us," Publius said soon after, while
The equal feast they shared; "as if one God
Alone thou worshippedst, All-giver named
By thee: but we have gods and goddesses
Diverse in name and office, unto whom
We offer gift and sacrifice diverse
According as may seem diversely meet.
Apollo is the regent of the sun,
Of the moon, Cynthia with her crescent bow;
Pomona is our patroness of fruits,
While Flora rules the gentle realm of flowers,
And mother Ceres yields us corn and oil.
Jupiter gives us weather, and he broods
In fecund incubation from the skies
Over the earth to quicken all that grows
With moisture; but he sometimes frowns in cloud

Not kindly, and hurtles down the thunderbolt.
Know it was Neptune that stirred up the sea
So, in that insurrection and revolt
Against you late, and stranded you forlorn,
Happy for me and mine! upon this isle;
For Neptune is the sovereign of the wave.
Those winds that blew meantime were breath in blast
Puffed from the cheeks of Æolus who holds
The invisible dominion of the air.
The world is peopled dense with deities
Whom well to worship all, is no light task.
We build them temples, and on altars there
Pour them out rivers of blood from victims slain;
Blood is the favorite drink to most of them.
The victims' flesh we offer them for food:
They do not eat it; so we eat it for them.
For instance now, these meats purveyed for you
Ere going to the shambles to be sold,
Were duly each presented to some god:
So we may gratify our appetite,
And feel that we are worshipping the while.
But Bacchus is our hospitable god:
A big, bluff, honest face we figure him,

Bloodthirsty not, but fond of festal cheer.
Him we best please by drinking of his gift,
Not blood of beast but generous blood of grape,
And spending a libation of the same,
Tribute to him, the end of every feast."

This spring and flow of talk idolatrous,
Uncertain how much serious and how much
A play of skeptic humor half ashamed,
Was a sad note discordant to the tune
Of chastened reverent feeling in the breasts
Of men and women owning debt indeed
For hospitality sincerely meant
By Publius they well knew, yet paramount
Allegiance owning to a jealous God
Who brooked no name divine beside His own.
All toward Paul turning waited, and he spoke:
"O Publius, guests are we and thou art host;
Most gracious we acknowledge thee to be,
As most ungracious were we did we not,
Or undiscerning. Thou hast honored us
Using that frankness to set forth thy ways,
Thine, and thy fellow countrymen's; ways yet
Far alien from the ways endeared to us.

These let me, honoring thee thus with return
Of frankness like thine own, declare to thee.

"We count that thy so-named divinities
Are nothing such as thou supposest them.
They are not gods, since God is one, and will
His incommunicable majesty
Permit none other to partake with Him.
Perhaps, when ye idolaters enshrine
Reputed images of whom ye call
Gods and these worship with your various rites,
It is with some endeavor of your thought
Beyond the sign to what is signified.
But so even is your worship worse than vain.
For there is nothing in the world — the world
Of things existent, things substantial, real,
Spirit or matter — that as counterpart
Answers to these conceived resemblances,
These idols framed by your artificers,
Pretending to be images of gods;
Nothing, I mean, that can be called Divine.
Behind them there is something real indeed,
But evil, not good; no such reality
As that ye dream. Demons, not gods are they,

Who, hid behind your idols, mask and mock.
Therefore we can but hate idolatry,
And flee it as one flees a pestilence.

"Forgive me, the affront is not to thee,
Not to thy fellow worshippers misled,
But to the kingdom of the Evil One,
That emperor of the powers of the air
Who for a season yet has sufferance here
To practice his impostures on mankind.
Thou therefore, O lord Publius, understand,
Thou, and ye others not of Hebrew race,
That we, full gladly sharing this fair feast,
And out of true hearts thanking him our host,
Know nothing of the dedications made
Of meats or drinks partaken to those gods
No gods; but give our worship and our praise
Only to one God over all Most High,
The Maker and the Ruler of all worlds,
Jehovah named, blesséd forevermore.
Add to our debt, O Publius, also this,
That I have spoken thus without offence."

Paul ended with a look toward Publius, then
Also toward Julius present there, which these

Felt as fixed firmness tempered with appeal.
Publius took counsel with quick sounding eyes
On the centurion bent, and answered thus,
His own thought by that other's fortified:
"O Paul, have thou thy will; no will have I
In this thing; all is one to me; our gods
Are our conventions, and we worship them
In form, but not in spirit. Strange to us
It seems, us more enlightened than the crowd,
Us who have tasted of philosophy,
To see thee thus engaged in earnestness
On the behalf of things not seen, not known."
Paul broke in with a burst of testimony:
"But I have seen, but I have known. The Lord,
The Lord Christ, Son of God declared, from heaven
Flashed in a sudden vision once on me,
Sudden and swift, for both my eyes went blind."
"It was a stroke of lightning blinded thee,"
Said Publius. "Nay, the sky was cloudless clear,"
Paul answered, "and the hour was high midnoon;
The Syrian sun was shining in his strength.
I know whom I believe and I adore
And bless Him, calling on my soul and all
That is within me to adore and bless

His holy name. Whether we eat or drink,
Or whatsoever do, in word or deed,
We His redeemed do all in our Lord's name,
To God the Father giving thanks through Him."
"Is this thy Lord to whom thou renderest thus
Thy service, the whole service of a life,"
So interrupted Publius, "is this Lord
The same as he whom Mary tells us of?"
"The same, O Publius," answered Paul. "But he —
I thought that he was put to death," replied
Publius. "Yea, but He burst the bands of death,
He rose in power and glory from the grave,
He thence ascended far above all height
Into the heaven of heavens beyond all thought,
Where He sat down enthroned forevermore
By the right hand of God;" so Paul, enrapt
And with his rapture aweing all who heard.

Publius then said, for now with meat and drink
The appetite to each was satisfied:
"O Paul, what thou thus sayest quickens in me
Desire to hear the rest of Mary's tale.
That death of shame, however undeserved,
Yet fallen on him as if inevitable —

He surely would have shunned it, if he could —
Had, I will own, induced in me some doubt
Whether the man who suffered it could be
Indeed the worker of such miracles
As those that Mary thought she saw from him.
But his triumphant rising from the dead,
His after showing of himself to thee,
That, this, if that, if this, did happen — why,
Such conquest over death and Hades won
And by such proof assured to us, were much.
But let us listen to what Mary yet
Will tell us of the last things to that life
And of the shameful death that ended it."

Then, with the genial sun, somewhat declined
From his steep noon, streaming his golden rays
Into the room to qualify the cool;
And with, beside, two ample braziers brought
Of coals in ruddy glow, one at each end,
To cheer the shadowed spaces of no sun,
The company, in comfortable wise —
After the fragments of the feast, with due
Despatchful ministry of practised hands,
Had disappeared, disposed themselves at will

And sat attentive to hear Mary's words.

But Mary's words hung and she did not speak;
Her voice had like a failing fountain failed,
And drifts of pallor whitened all her cheek.
A doubtful moment, and she swayed to fall
In death or death-like swoon upon the floor.
But Ruth who sat next quickly stayed her up;
Then, letting her sink softly toward supine
On her own bosom, held her resting thus.
Resourceful ministration soon revived
Her spirits to Mary, till she seemed herself
Again, and thought that they might trust her now
Not to disturb them more with cause for fear.
So, with a certain added gentleness
In tone and manner marking her, she spoke
Thus, while the rest with added reverence heard:

"That image of my Lord abides to me;
I see Him as I saw Him when I heard
'Behold the man!' The memory of my eyes
Is vivid and it seems to dazzle dark
The vision that by faith I ought to see.
I know and I believe that Jesus now
Is glorious in the heaven beyond all reach

Of anything to flaw His perfect fair.
But what he then was still will swim between,
And I perforce see this instead of that.
My ears ring with the maddening murderous shout
Of the chief priests and rulers with the mob
Mingling their voices now, 'Crucify Him!'
'He made himself the Son of God,' they cry.
That frightened Pilate, and, 'Whence art thou?' he
Asked Jesus, in his palace-hall withdrawn;
But Jesus never answered him a word.
Pilate was vexed, and tried browbeating Him.
'Speakest thou not to me? Dost thou not know
I can release thee if I will,' he said;
'Or, if I will can send thee to the cross?'
Then Jesus spoke. He said: 'No power is thine
Save as bestowed upon thee from above.
Therefore who gave me up to thee, he hath
The greater sin.'

"Pilate perhaps was awed,
Or he perhaps, albeit a cruel man,
Was truly for this once compassionate.
However it was, he sought with quickened zeal
To pacify the Jews for the release

Of Jesus; but they knew that governor,
And he knew that they knew him, and when they
Cried out, 'Thou art not Cæsar's friend, if thou
Release this man; whoever makes himself
A king, speaks against Cæsar,' Pilate then
Trembled within his mind for guilty fear.
He covered over his weakness with vain show
Of mock and sarcasm as, with Jesus brought
Forth from within before them, he exclaimed,
'Behold your king!' Tumultuously all
Hooted, 'Away with him! Away with him!
Crucify him!' 'What! Crucify your king?'
Bitterly said Pilate, dashing ruth with sneer.
Those proud chief priests, eating their pride at once
And God abjuring, said: 'We have no king
But Cæsar.' Then he gave Him up to them.

"But Pilate acted out before them all
In symbol a purgation of himself.
He had a basin of water brought, and washed
His hands, and said: 'Lo, I am innocent
Of this just blood; see ye yourselves to it.'
And all my people shouted out a curse
Upon themselves which for their sakes I fain

Had stopped my ears against — if not to hear,
Could have undone that dreadful curse! They
cried,
'On us and on our children be his blood!'
God waits yet, but not long, to wreak that curse.

"That was the end of all until the cross.
A multitude of people followed Him,
As He went forth out of the city gate
Bearing His cross to Golgotha, the place
Where He should suffer. Thither going, they
Met Simon a Cyrenean coming in,
And, of some wanton humor seized, they made
Him take the cross and bear it. With the throng
Mingled, were many women who like me
Wailed and lamented. But the Lord to us
Turning said: 'Daughters of Jerusalem,
Weep not for me; but for yourselves weep ye,
Yea, and your children. For the days will come
When, Blessed are the barren, ye shall say,
And breasts that never nourished children. Lo,
Then to the mountains men shall lift their cry,
Fall ye upon us; Cover us, to the hills.'

"While they nailed Jesus to His cross, He spake

Words such as never other spake before;
Upward He spake, praying, and not to them.
'Father,' He prayed, 'forgive them, for, behold,
They know not what they do.' So there He hung,
The Savior of the world, upon His cross.
I saw the soldiers four whose watch it was
Sit unconcerned — not knowing what they did! —
And cast lots for the garments of the Lord.
'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews,'
Pilate had written in three languages,
Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, on the cross;
For so he gave his jeering humor play.
The chief priests winced at this, and begged of him,
'King of the Jews, write not, but that he said,
King of the Jews am I.' But Pilate spoke
Curtly, 'What I have written, I have written.'
There then the title stood, a bitterness
Mixed in their cup of triumph to the Jews,
And a truth deeper far than Pilate guessed.

"Mary, the mother of the Lord, stood by;
Jesus beheld her, and, close at her side,
That one of His disciples whom He loved.
A word then from those suffering lips which wrung

The mother-heart of Mary with sweet woe
To hear it spoken at such time as this.
'Woman,' said Jesus, to His mother speaking,
'Behold, thy son!' He meant John, for to him
Likewise He spake, 'Behold, thy mother!' So
Thenceforward Mary had with John her home.

"There were chance passers-by that railed on
Him,
Not knowing, those too, what they did! They
scoffed,
Wagging their heads: 'Ha! Thou that couldst
destroy
The temple and rebuild it in three days,
Save thyself now, and from the cross come down.'
After the same sort the chief priests and scribes,
Mocking among themselves, made mirth and said:
'Others he saved, let him now save himself!
The Christ of God, the King of Israel,
Let him come down now from the cross, and we,
We, will believe on him.' Two robbers even
Crucified with him joined the ribaldry,
Tauntingly saying, 'Save thyself and us!'
But one of them relented, touched with grace.

He praying said, 'Jesus, remember me
When Thou art come into Thy kingdom!' Faith
Like that, to see and to believe — despite
The shame and seeming helplessness — the king
In Jesus of a world beyond the world,
Won on the Lord; and He — He too with faith,
Sheer faith, faith far more wonderful in Him —
Gave answer calmly as became the king,
'This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.'

"It grew now to be near the point of noon,
And there fell midnight darkness on the land
Gross for three hours; it was as if the sun
In heaven would not behold that wickedness.
Then the Lord Jesus uttered a loud cry,
The saddest that on earth was ever heard;
'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani,'
He said. Those are the first words of a psalm
Prophetic of a suffering Savior Christ;
They mean, 'My God, my God, wherefore hast thou
Forsaken me?' That was the bitterness,
That must, I think, have been the bitterness,
Which most He dreaded in Gethsemane."

Mary looked up toward Paul with eyes that asked

Whether she well divined that this was so.
Paul swerved a little from the point, but said:
"The mystery of redemption! A great deep
It is, to us unfathomable quite —
Soundless as is the mystery of sin.
But alienation and exile from God,
Distance, and darkness, and abandonment,
This, sin works of its own necessity;
And this helps make the sinner's punishment.
Therefore to feel a frightful sense of this
Perhaps was needful to atone for sin."

Paul so far only, and then Mary said:
"The Savior's sense of that abandonment
Must have been short, I think, as short as sharp.
For following close upon that lonely cry,
There came this word, 'I thirst.' It was as though —
The imperious overmastering agony
Of spirit past — the flesh, silenced before,
Had leave to speak now witnessing its need.
Anguished the word was, but it seemed relief
To hear such sad acknowledgment succeed
The desolation of that other wail.
They brought a hyssop drenched in vinegar,

And on a reed lifted it to His lips.
That moisture loosed his tongue to speak once more,
The utter last time that he ever spake —
Until He used His resurrection voice.
The words were: 'It is finished! Father, I
Into Thy hands commend my spirit.' Loud
He spoke thus, and therewith His head declined,
Surrendering so His spirit up to God.
It did not seem like dying, as men die
Of sickness or of violence causing death.
I could not but bethink me how He said
Once, 'I lay down my life, no man from me
Taketh it, of myself I lay it down!"

So Mary, with a cadence in her voice
That meant an end of speaking for that time.

BOOK XVIII.

KRISHNA.

The company still together though the hour is late, Krishna, at the request of Publius, after a breathing-spell enjoyed by all under the open sky, tells the story of the death of Buddha. A warning recited by him as having proceeded from the dying Buddha's lips against all speech on the part of his disciples with womankind, prompts Krishna to turn, with apology in his manner, in a kind of appeal to Paul, who, answering, gives the contrasted teaching of Christianity on this topic. At the conclusion of Krishna's recital, Publius makes a few characteristic observations suggested by it, and the company, having first agreed to assemble on some favorable day at dawn to hear from Mary the story of the resurrection of Jesus, disperse.

KRISHNA.

Slowly the solemn of late afternoon
Settled into the somber of twilight:
It was a pensive company that there
Sat nursing each his thought as if alone.
Then Julius, out of muse and memory,
Spoke, without harming the suspense of awe
That held all as pavilioned round with God:
"Yea, I remember to have heard it said,
In fact it was a story of the camp
Among us soldiers in Jerusalem,
That the centurion who stood by and watched
The doings of that day and Jesus' death,
Said, when he saw that having so cried out
He yielded up the ghost, 'Surely he was
The Son of God!'"

"The death was wonderful,"
Said Publius, "not like that of any man."
He spoke with reverence far from insincere,
And yet a note of shallow in his tone

Was dissonant to the feeling of the hour.
This, Krishna with a fine discernment felt
When Publius turned to him, and made demand:
"And now, O Krishna, tell us thou of him,
Thy master Buddha, how he met his death.
But first, O friends my guests," he added then,
With volatile quick turn, "let us all forth
Into the open underneath the sky
And shake the languor of our sitting off.
The night is fine, no wind, and weather mild;
A half hour's freedom out of doors to breathe
The fresh air, and with motion loose our limbs
And make our blood brisk, will be nigh as good
As a night's sleep for health to body and mind."
Host and symposiarch, Publius clapped his hands,
And to the servants promptly answering said:
"Lamps, and more braziers brim with glowing coals;
Also refection, cakes and wine, good store."
Therewith the company dispersed at will,
Wandering in groups or singly as each chose.

When, after a brief interval, they all
Were under roof once more, refreshed with change,
Publius said: "The evening yet is long,

And all the night thereafter is ours for sleep,
With an untouched to-morrow if need be
To borrow from and piece the measure out.
Eat ye and drink at leisure and at ease;
Meanwhile, and not to overtask our friend
Here who likewise shall share his equal chance
With us of what may stay hunger and thirst,
Let us content our nobler appetite
With viand brought us out of utmost Ind."

The Roman hugged himself with a pleased sense
That he had turned his genial phrases right.

The Indian for his part, not voluble
By nature, would have wished to hold his peace;
For Mary's tale had wrought upon him so
That he was lost in thought and absentness.
Loth rallied out of mute to use of speech,
He felt the bonds of courtesy and said:
"O Publius, would thou hadst rather been content
To leave this Hebrew story uncompared.
I have no means to parallel it so
As need were I should do for right effect;
Since neither was I present to behold,
Nor lives there record by eyewitness made."

As these words wavering from the Indian fell,
The dimness of the lamplight in the room,
Clouded with fumy issue from the flame,
Seemed to become a symbol of that dark,
That doubtful, that uncertain, which he thus
Shadowed his tale withal — strange contrast felt
To the eyewitness truth and lifelikeness
Of Mary's story by full daylight told.
But Krishna heartened himself to firmly say:
"Howbeit there is tradition that we trust.
This holds the voyage was peaceful toward the end,
The voyage of Buddha through the last of life;
Not without pain, but peaceful as was fit
For voyage slow tending to the port of peace.
There was no persecution of the Buddh;
Or he had long outlived it ere his death.
He died among old friends who loved him well,
Soothing him toward nirvâna with all heed
Of healing words spoken to him or heard
From him, and nothing lacked to stay his steps,
As he declined gently, with neither haste
To go hence nor desire to linger here,
Down the slow slope that slides into the sea
Of utter, utter void and nothingness.

"It was a kindly office rendered him
By a fast friend, Kunda his name, that brought,
He far from meaning it, the master's end.
Kunda prepared his master's food, a dish
Of swine's flesh dried, with savory messes dressed.
Our lord waxed weary with walking, for he was old;
Full fifty years long since his wasted youth
(Wasted his youth had been on fleshly lusts),
He had gone the beggar's ways from door to door
While he taught men how to escape from life;
Weary thus, Buddha rested in a grove
Of mangoes; his disciples, a great band,
Accompanying. Kunda's was the grove, and he
Sat by the master's side, and with his ears
Drank in deep draughts of wisdom from those lips.
Then he besought the master to partake,
The master with his disciples to partake,
Refreshment on the morrow at his house;
By silence Buddha signified assent.

"So at the hour boar's flesh was offered him;
And he did not refuse it for himself,
But bade his host give other food to them,
His brethren; sweet rice was their share, and cakes.

Some prescience warned him what the end would be;
'For other none, save such as I myself,'
The Blesséd One to Kunda listening said,
'Were able to receive this nourishment,
The boar's flesh, and convert it to right use.
So what remains thereof when I have done,
Bury it under ground and eat it not.'
So spoke lord Buddha and partook the meat.
But he was seized straightway with colic pangs
That griped him sore; long time be sought in vain
For ease to his distress; but he was calm
And fully self-possessed amid it all,
Uttering no complaint. Relieved at last
A little, he to his attendant said—
Ânanda that one was, the Venerable—
'On now to Kusinârâ I will go.'

"But going, he fell weary with the way
And rested underneath a tree. 'I thirst,'
To Ânanda he said; 'fetch me to drink.'
But Ânanda replied: 'This stream, behold,
Is turbid, roiled with many passing wheels:
Yon other river is a pleasant stream,
With banks that make it easy of access.'

'I thirst, O Ânanda,' the master said
A second time, repeating the same words.
And yet a second time too Ânanda
Repeated that the nearer stream was foul,
And the one farther on approachable
And clear. A third time Buddha said, 'I thirst,'
And a third time repeated those same words.
Then Ânanda no longer made demur,
But took a bowl and to the streamlet went.
The water that had just been roiled with wheels
Was flowing limpid, bright, and sweet. He thought,
'How wonderful, how marvellous, the power,
The might, of the Tathâgata!' But he,
The Blesséd One, received the bowl and drank.
(Tathâgata we call our Buddha, so
Honoring him as one who holds himself
Filially faithful to ancestral ways.)

"To Kusinârâ faring forward still
The Buddha sowed instructions all the way.
But that which he in his forethoughtful care
Said for the solacing of Kunda's mind,
Should Kunda peradventure afterward
Hear some one say to him, 'O Kunda, that

Was evil to thee and loss, that Buddha died
Having partaken his last meal with thee'—
What Buddha said forefending blame like that,
Was memorable. He Ânanda thus taught:
'Tell Kunda: That was good to thee, and gain,
That the Tathâgata then died when he
Had his last meal as guest of thine partaken.
There is no offering of alms in food
Of greater profit unto him who gives
Than when one offers a Tathâgata
Food that once eaten by him he departs
With that complete departure wherein naught
Of all that late he was is left to be.

"One admonition our lord Buddha gave
In those last times with him, which let me pray
From some of you pardon that I report;
New lessons I have learned of womanhood,
Sharing these feasts of converse with you all.
Now Ânanda inquired of Buddha this:
'How, master, shall we deal with womankind?'
'O Ânanda,' the master made reply,
'Refrain from seeing them.' But Ânanda
Said: 'If by chance we see them at some time?'

'Abstain, O Ânanda, from speech with them,'
The Blesséd One made answer. Ânanda
Once more: 'O master, if they speak to us?'
'Bestir your senses to keep well awake,'
The Buddha said in final warning word."

The Indian paused hereon, his eyes down dropt,
A noble gentle shame confusing him.
He would have added (what, not added, Paul
Felt in his manner of reticence implied)
Tardy acknowledgment of fault his own
That he at first had spurned the thought proposed
To him of learning aught from Mary's lips;
Acknowledgment condign, with suit to be
Judged gently since his master so had taught —
All this he would have said in words outright,
But sense of other duty kept him dumb;
Besides that he was conscious in his mind
Of being by Paul already understood.

Publius as master of the feast perceived
Blindly that here a rally of some sort
Was needed for the rescue of the cheer
Just trembling on the balance to be lost.

He was perplexed, but his perplexity
Was his resource better than ready wit.
For, with a quick dependent instinct, he
Turned him to Paul unconsciously confessed
Ascendent wheresoever he might be,
And Paul, thus silently appealed to, spoke:
"Such thought of woman is not from the Lord;
The Lord our God made woman one with man.
Equal? Nay, equal not. Inferior? Nay,
Nor equal nor inferior; as too not
Superior; rather, part of him, as he
Of her, they twain together one, and whole
Neither without the other. He is head,
Not lord and master to rule over her,
As she not slave, not servant, to be ruled;
She, of her will unforced, subject to him
Through joyful choice of reverence and of love,
And he, with equal mutual reverent love,
Honoring her and cherishing as himself."

"So is it with you," said Krishna, "as I have seen
With wonder, and admired; almost convinced
That ye herein are better taught than I.
If I perchance in anything have failed

Of reverence meet toward womankind, I pray
Pardon ye it to me; and hold besides
That haply my lord Buddha had himself
Judged otherwise herein, with other types
To judge from of what womankind may be."

"Yea," Paul said, "he but judged from what he saw;
Not knowing he, as our Lord Jesus knew,
What God from the beginning and before
Established as the order of His world,
And looked upon it and pronounced it good.
But also what your Buddha judged amiss
Became a force creating what he saw;
For teaching and believing, subtle powers,
Are plastic to conform us to themselves.
What ye believe of woman, teaching her
To know that ye believe it of her, yea,
Making her half believe it of herself,
This she hereby, even in her own despite,
Tends to become; if it unworthy be,
Then all the issuing stream of humankind,
Fouled at the fountain thus, flows forth corrupt
And ever more corrupt — the stream turned back

With every generation to its source,
And adding to the feculence of that.

"The ruin has no remedy but one.
The Lord Christ by a woman came to us,
And opened a new fountain for our race,
Pure, more than pure, for purifying too.
Life drawn from Him, life fed from Him, life lived
In Him and for Him, that alone is pure,
And endless because boundless; blesséd; joy,
And peace, and power, and triumph evermore.
His life may all through faith in Him partake,
Faith which unites us vitally to Him.
Christ is the founder of a race redeemed,
Redeemed from sin, and death, and every ill.
In Him believing, we rejoice with joy
Unspeakable and full of glory, now
Already though before the time in hope.
Belief in misery makes miserable.
We do not need to be defeated so;
Thanks be to God Most High who giveth us
The victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!

"Would that thy Buddha groping in his dark,
Nobly as seems, with that maimed nobleness

Which only is left possible by sin
Without a Savior known, ah, would that he
Had known a Savior such as Christ the Lord!

"Yet let us hear, O Publius, if so please
Thee and so please Krishna likewise, the rest
Concerning Buddha's death. We shall at least,
Sorrowing with wholesome sorrow for his case,
Learn from such high example how far short
The highest human and the best, unhelped,
Must fall of helping helpless humankind."

The tone of just authority in Paul,
Felt to be not assertion of himself
But fealty to his Lord effacing self,
Was mixed so with a suasive gentleness
In manner and even a certain deference
To other as that other's right from him,
All without harm or loss allowed to truth,
That Krishna was both charmed and overawed
While discomposed not, and he thus went on:
"Ânanda was concerned to know what dues
Of honor should be paid to the remains
Of the Tathâgata when he was gone.
But Buddha said: 'Ye must not wrong yourselves

To honor the Tathâgata's remains;
Others will honor these. Be zealous ye,
I pray you, on your own behalf. Devote
Yourselves to your own profit. Earnest be
And eager and intent for your own good.'
Yet Buddha taught that the Tathâgata
Was to be honored after his decease
By rites of reverence to his remains
Like those accorded to a king of kings,

"Now Ânanda the Venerable was weighed
To heaviness with sorrow at the thought:
'Alas, I still am but a learner, much
To me remains of labor, ere I reach
Nirvâna; and my master, he so kind,
Is on the point to pass away from me.'
So, leaned against the lintel of the door,
Ânanda stood and thought and thinking wept.
But Buddha sending called him to himself,
And said: 'Enough, O Ânanda, weep not,
Nor let thyself be troubled. Have I not
Oft told thee that it deep inheres in things
The nearest and the dearest unto us,
That we must leave them, rend ourselves away,

Sever ourselves from them? How could it be,
Ânanda, otherwise than thus? For know,
Whatever thing is born, whatever comes
Into existence, holds within itself
The seed of dissolution and decay;
Such being therefore needs must cease to be.
Long time thou, Ânanda, to me hast been,
By many offices of love, most near,
Unchanging love and without measure large.
Thrice say I this that thou mayst know it well:
Long time thou, Ânanda, to me hast been,
By many offices of love, most near,
Unchanging love and without measure large.
Long time thou, Ânanda, to me hast been
By many offices of love, most near,
Unchanging love and without measure large.
Thou hast well done, O Ânanda. Faint not,
Thou too shalt soon Anâsava become'—
Whereby our lord meant his disciple soon
Should touch the wished-for goal himself was now
Nigh touching, blest nirvâna, last surcease
Of all the ills that sum up human life.

"At length lord Buddha said to Ânanda:

'Go now for me into Kusinârâ
And tell them the Tathâgata is here,
Close on the point to pass forever away.
Say: Leave no room to chide yourselves too late:
Alas, and he in our own village died,
He, the Tathâgata, and we then failed
To come and visit him in his last hours.'
So all the dwellers in Kusinârâ
Came and did honor to the Blesséd One.

"Then to the brethren of the order he
Said: 'If in mind perchance to any of you
Doubt or misgiving lurk concerning aught,
The Buddh, the truth, the path, the way, inquire
Freely before I pass, that afterward
Ye have not to reproach yourselves that ye
Being face to face with him failed to inquire.'
With one accord, the brethren held their peace.
The second and the third time those same words
Did the Tathâgata to them address;
But even the third time they were silent all.
Then with much pitiful concern for them
The Buddha said: 'It may be out of awe
Of me, your master, ye keep silence thus.

Speak therefore ye, I pray, among yourselves.'
But all the brotherhood were silent still.
Then Ânanda the Venerable spoke up
And said: 'A wonder and a marvel, lord,
I truly think there has not one of us
A doubt or a misgiving in his mind
As to the Buddh, the truth, the path, the way.
The Blesséd One made answer: 'Ânanda,
Thou from the fulness of thy faith hast spoken;
But the Tathâgata for certain knows
Not one of these five hundred brethren all
Doubt or misgiving has concerning aught,
The Buddh, the truth, the path, the way. No one
Of all but guarded is from future birth
To suffering; your salvation is secure.'
He added: 'Brethren, I exhort you, know,
Decay inheres in whatsoever is,
Of parts composed, since these may be dissolved.
Inflame your zeal, make your salvation sure.'
The last word that of the Tathâgata.

"Yet did he not with that last word expire,
But enter into a state ineffable.
From stage to stage, four stages, he advanced,

Of meditation more and more withdrawn.
A fifth stage followed, one of vacancy
Compact: all seeming substance, seeming form,
Abolished to the mind, and naught but space,
Pure space, empty and formless, colorless,
Spun out to infinite on every side.
The next degree abolished also space,
Replacing that with reason infinite.
But reason infinite then passed away,
Dispersed into a sense of nothingness.
Then sense of nothingness, that yielded too,
And neither anything nor nothing was
A presence in sensation to the soul.
But beyond that he passed into a state
Between unconsciousness and consciousness;
Whence next he issued in a farther stage
Wherein no trace of consciousness remained.
Then of two venerables there watching, one
Said to the other, 'The Blessèd One is dead;'
But, 'Nay,' that other made reply, 'not dead,
Only beyond where thought or feeling is.'

"Then by regress the Blesséd One returned
The way that he had traversed, stage by stage,

Till, having reached the first stage, now the last,
That of deep meditation, he expired.

"So our lord Buddha having all the depths
Sounded unto their nethermost, and scaled
Unto their topmost all the soaring heights,
Of thought and being, like a weaver's shuttle
To and fro passing, and found naught at all
The substance and the basis of the world,
Himself at last absorbed in the abyss
Escaped existence and sank into peace."

The lamps had burned to low, and some of them
Had flickered to a fall, while Krishna spoke —
Their fumy flames meanwhile blurring the air
To dimness deepened with the deepening night.
The stillness of the room was audible,
Accented by the murmurous monotone
Of Krishna's muffled, bland, and inward voice.
The strange, far-off, unreal, unthinkable
Last things he told involved the laboring mind
Too, in a sense confused of cloud and dark.
When he ceased speaking, with that word pronounced,
"Peace," like a hollow sphere of sound, no core,

It was as if, with that for spell outbreathed,
Nirvâna softly would engulf them all.

But one was there to whom such spell was naught.
"'Peace,'" Publius said, reechoing the word,
As pondering what the purport of it was,
"'Peace,' I should think must be a euphemism,
As the Greeks say when they avoid a name,
The right name, for a thing to be avoided.
There is no peace, unless there be some one
To have the peace; but Buddha then was not,
Had vanished like a breath breathed on the air,
If of his end I have understood thee right."
"Thou hast not misunderstood," said Krishna; "yet
We shrink from saying of Buddha, 'He is not.'
We sheathe the sense, and softly say instead,
'He has ceased to suffer,' 'He has touched the goal.'
Himself he would not say, 'I shall not be;'
But if he taught us true that life is woe,
Then not to suffer, needs is not to live:
Save not to live, salvation there is none."

"Aye," Publius said, "I see, a euphemism;
A needed euphemism, and well devised.
For who, not weary of life through long defeat,

Or through disease, old age, or loss of good,
Or else exhausted in the springs of joy
Within himself through waste of youth and health
In those excesses which bring on decay
Before its season — who not broken so,
Here and there one, not many in any time,
Would to that bait proffered without disguise,
Mere blank non-being, spring with appetite?
And those, the few who did, would they await
Nirvâna as the goal of long pursuit,
Not snatch it instant with rash suicide?
We Romans have a growing fashion of so
Precipitately rushing on our end.
I trow thou wouldst in vain strive to persuade
Us Romans to spend tedious years and years
In seeking not to live so as not to suffer;
We should be too impatient far for that."
"O Publius," Krishna said, "rash suicide
Is no escape from life. Life has its snare
Safe round thee still, and thou art born again
Into another form, another state,
Worse, and not better, than before. The Path,
That only, leads thee to the utter end:
So Buddha taught and so I have believed."

The Indian ceased thus with the air of one
Wavering where he had certain been before;
And Publius felt that he for Krishna spoke,
Scarce less than for himself, when he inquired:
"Aye, aye, how know we that the 'Path,' to name
Thus by thy word a thing to me unknown,
How know we that the Path, even that, indeed
Will lead one out of life to nothingness?
If so be Buddha's doctrine holds, and life
Slides on from form to form, from state to state,
Unhindered by the fact of suicide,
How know we that there ever comes an end?
Consider, he himself, the teacher, may,
Who knows?—this moment while we talk of him
Be fleeting forward on the endless flight
Fatal of that metempsychosis preached.
What surety have we that it is not so?

"And since so much we ask, let us ask more,
O Krishna. How know we the master died
After the manner that thou toldst us of?
That Kunda's kindly hospitable meal
Was followed by that sickness to his guest;
That his guest bore it with sweet fortitude,

Not intermitting his serene discourse
The while, yet weakening slowly till he died —
Thus much, I say, might be observed by those
Who stood about the master so bestead ;
But who could tell that in his secret mind
The dying Buddh accomplished all that strange
Vicissitude and movement to and fro,
Which thou in honey-flowing speech describedst,
But which, pardon, I could not understand.
Himself, the Buddha, uttered not one word
Through all, made not a motion nor a sign.
How, pray, did those disciples round him pierce
The dark and silence of their master's mind,
To know what passed therein ?" "Ah," Krishna said,
"The master had foretold those things would be
To him, and they believed, and therefore knew."

"Aye," Publius said, "they knew by faith, not proof ;
But we, we of the West, are fond of proof.
Yet proof of Buddha's dying so as thou
Describedst, proof likewise that he, so dying,
Was cancelled quite from out the universe —

Proof of these things, conceded these things were,
Would, I can see, be no wise possible;
We may believe them, but we cannot prove.
Now if thy master had taught otherwise,
Contrariwise indeed, that life, not death —
Not death, but life victorious over death —
Was the chief good, and that this good the chief
Might be attained by us, and how attained,
That were a doctrine would have cheered one more,
And been besides more capable of proof.
At least good proof of it might be conceived.
Buddha, supposed extinguished utterly
Out of the world, he being nowhere at all,
Could not come hither back and testify,
'Behold me, I am non-existent now.'
But one who taught the opposite, who taught
That death was not the end of life, if he
Himself, having died, could conquer death and live,
Could living hither come and speak to us,
And say, 'I told you I would rise again!'
Why, Krishna, that were proof and 'Path' indeed,
Aye, path as solid as a Roman road.

"It seems from this our Hebrew lady's tale,

That Jesus, ere he suffered on the cross,
Promised again and yet again that he
Would rise the third day from the dead and live.
I doubt not thou thyself, with all of us,
Wouldst gladly farther hear from her at full
Whether and how this promise was fulfilled."

"That is a tale for a new day and dawn,"
Paul said; "the resurrection of the Lord
Was morning before morning when it came.
Mary, not waiting for daybreak, repaired
By twilight to His tomb and found it void.
A great while before day the Lord sometimes
Would rouse him and go forth apart to pray;
Perhaps a great while before day He now
Woke from the sleep of death, and left his tomb.
What morning then it was dawned on the world!"

"Well thought," said Publius; "let us at daybreak,
Some day not long hence when the weather smiles,
Meet out of doors and see sunrise, while we
Hear also of that sunrise on the world
Paul in his master's resurrection finds;
Whereof to hear at least, surely were sweet.

Spring hastens hither, with the punctual sun
Returning from his winter in the south.
There will not fail a weather warm enough,
Some select balmier morning by and by,
To make it pleasant for us, in a place
I know of on the sheltered ocean shore
Fronting full east, to meet and hear a tale
So well befitting spring and morning both
As a tale told of victory over death.
I will, if so it please all, undertake
To rally you in season when signs say, Now!"

Thereon the company broke up, with thanks
From each guest to the host for heartsome cheer
Provided; and with silent prayer from each
That God would bless him through their guestship there
More than he dreamed of needing to be blessed!

BOOK XIX.

BAPTISM OF KRISHNA.

Krishna, much wrought upon in his secret mind, seeks a private interview with Paul. The two converse at large, Paul expounding his doctrine of sin and of salvation through faith in Christ. Krishna resists, feeling nevertheless an impulse in himself responsive to Paul's words. They part with nothing concluded between them, but Krishna meditating alone is finally brought to obedience of faith. He seeks the company of the Christian disciples and declares himself a believer. He expressing eager desire to testify as soon as possible in some outward act commanded by Jesus his readiness to obey Him, Paul tells him of the command "Be baptized," and Krishna accordingly is baptized by Aristarchus, Paul giving the new disciple appropriate counsel and exhortation.

BAPTISM OF KRISHNA.

As the days passed, the prisoner Paul, allowed
The freedom of his ways about the isle,
Would often, musing by himself alone —
Or haply his shadow Stephen following so
As never to be seen yet ever see
In jealous loving watch and ward of him —
Walk in seclusions well to Julius known
Where, held by all the islanders in awe
And sentried as if sentried not the while,
He could be safe in sense of solitude
And easement from the fret of custody.

He walking thus one sunny afternoon,
The Indian met him at the hither goal
And entrance to his wonted rounding ways,
And with such salutation greeted him
As seemed to seek access for mutual speech.
Paul, out of insulation and himself
Emerging wholly at his fellow's call,
Rallied at once to be a social man;
He welcomed Krishna frankly to his side,

And they twain walked and talked together there.
"O Paul," said Krishna, "I am not at rest;
Thou, and that Mary's story of her Lord,
Have deeply shaken my repose in me.
There must have been, lodged in me from the first,
A witness ready to speak up and say,
'Hearken, O Krishna!' when the name of 'God'
Fell on my ear. For since that word from thee,
I have not ceased to hear within me cry
Reverberant through the chambers of my soul—
Like a voluminous echo shouting round
Reduplicated images of voice—
Clamor and attestation vehement
Confirming what thou saidst that day of God,
And of our orphanhood without Him. Oh,
My friend, that I might find Him, I, even I!"

Such passion in passivity moved Paul
To pity, which he hid, while thus he spoke:
"It is the answer of the infinite
Within thee to the infinite above
Thee and beneath thee and about thee round.
God made thee for Himself, and Himself is
The only good that can content thy mind.

Feel after Him and find Him, He is nigh,
Drawn nigh and drawing nigh, in Jesus Christ.
Not to believe in Him, God's Son made flesh —
He once revealed to thee — this, this, is sin;
And sin is death; but to believe is life.
Believe and live, O Krishna."

"Thy word 'sin,'
O Paul," said Krishna, "it perplexes me.
What is sin? Evil, I guess. Now evil I know
In many forms — forms many, essence one —
Misery all. But sin to thee, I trow,
Is something else than simple misery."

"O, yea," said Paul, "and measurelessly more.
No misery is like sin, but sin is evil
Not to be told in terms of misery.
The sinner is an enemy of God;
God is against him, and the wrath of God
Abides upon him; such is the evil of sin.
For sin is the transgression of the law,
That law which is the will of God express
In precept, or that law more broad, more deep,
Higher, which is the will of God inwrought
Into the substance of the human heart.

Thou canst not live transgressor of this law
And be at peace; God is too merciful
To suffer it. For mercy it is in God
Which wrath we call; against the sinner, wrath;
But toward the man, mercy eager to save:
The wrath of God is as the shepherd's crook
Which with threat drives the foolish flock to fold.
Hasten, obey, be folded, thou, by Him,
The shepherd and the bishop of thy soul.
Within is safety, life, and peace, and joy;
Ruin, without, and wretchedness, and death."

"A living Will," said Krishna, "in the waste,
The wild waste, of a world of chance and fate—
A Will amid it, nay, much more, a Mind,
A Heart, present, presiding over all
The blind whirl of the things we see, whereof
We seem ourselves a petty part, impelled
Helpless—whither, who knows?—this is to me
A thought greater than the great universe;
Yet does it less than that oppress, appal;
I feel my spirit in me quickened too
While overwhelmed. O were it true indeed!
And were this Being whom thou namest God

Willing to condescend and think on me!
I feel that I could love Him if I could
Believe Him — in the teeth of all that seems
To swear against Him in this dreadful world!"

"The whole creation groaneth, yea," said Paul,
"And travaileth under the curse of sin.
But the blind-bondman universe awaits
With earnest expectation a new day
When he shall be delivered from his thrall,
To share, we know not how, that liberty
Which is the birthright of the sons of God.
Meantime the discord and the perjury
Thou seest of a distracted universe
Forsworn against its Maker! Yet even so
Enough abides unshaken from the firm
Fair order of the first all-wise design,
To testify His everlasting power
Who framed it. But, beyond that perjury
Thou findest in the janglings of the world
Browbeating faith herself to disbelieve,
Is the blaspheming atheous spirit in man
Which *will* not God. O strife and warfare strange
Within us! Godward-springing instinct fain

To answer 'Abba, Father!' to His call,
And all the while rebellion muttering, 'Nay!'
O wretched, wretched creatures that we are!
Who, who is able to deliver us
Out of the clinging body of this death?
I thank my God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

"Christ's voice against the clamor of the world,
His still small voice, heard by the inner ear
Of whosoever will heed and obey,
Makes music of this roaring dissonance
Which dins and deafens every one besides.
Hush the gainsaying of the heart within,
O Krishna, the dull heart of unbelief,
And hearken if thou shalt not presently
Hear Him say, Come. It is a heavenly sound,
Heard never save by the anointed ear
Of true obedience; but once heard thereby
It ever after lingers in the sense
A haunting invitation still obeyed.
And still as we obey it, drawing near
And nearer to that Voice forevermore,
Forevermore we hear the harmony
Evolved from the confusions of the world

Grow perfect and the discord die away.
Like as a human father pitieth
His children, so Jehovah God Most High
Pitieth them that fear Him. This long since
We heard through one inspired from God to sing
It cadenced in our sweet and solemn psalms."

Krishna could not but speak his froward thought:
"It looks such contradiction to the fact
Staring us in the face from round about
Us wheresoever in the world we turn
Our eyes and see the seeming pitiless
Ongoing of the blind necessity
That, deaf and blind and irresistible,
Rides like a Juggernaut upon his car
Crushing beneath the wheels the hearts of men
And spirting up their blood to splash his feet!"

Unwonted passion heaved the Indian's breast,
And shook the tones in which he said these
things.
Paul gently made reply as one that knew:
"Yea, such the spectacle that sight beholds;
Nor ever other had the mind of man
Guessed, had the voice of God not spoken clear

To Faith, revealing His veiled fatherhood:
The blatant falsehood of the seeming fact
Failed in the ear of Faith hearing that word.
She said: 'It must be true; how otherwise
Than because God Himself who cannot lie
Declared it could such gospel come to men?
Not from the world of sense; that world instead
Gainsays it with all clamor of perjury;
Not from the heart of man averse from God
And full of alien fear through hate of Him:
For filial fear it is, begot of love,
Not alien fear, of conscious hate begot,
That God desires from men and will reward
With pity like a father's for their state.
Yea, such a gospel must from God have come;
Let God be true and the whole world a liar.'
So Faith cried out in passionate protest
Against appearance, and clasped fast her creed.

"But when the fulness of the time was come,
God sent a mighty succor down to Faith
Faint with her fasting in the wilderness.
From His own bosom He His only Son,
Only and well-belovéd, the express

Image of His own person and the bright
Effulgence of the Father's glory, tore
And bade Him, joyful at the mission He:
'Empty Thyself of thine equality
With Me in Godhead; take the lowly form
Of a bondservant; fashioned like a man
Humble Thyself to be obedient
Through all degrees of all obedience
Unfaltering down to that extreme degree
Of death, yea even of death upon the cross!'
For God so loved the world, with pity loved,
That He His own Son and His only gave
That whosoever should on Him believe
Might perish not, but have eternal life.

"A paradox divine of love and pity —
God sparing not His own coequal Son,
But, last impossible proof of love to men,
Giving Him freely up to suffer so,
The just for the unjust, if haply He
Might bring us unto God! His father's heart
Of tenderness toward His obedient Son
Breaking, while He that Son delivered up —
Father and Son together overcome

With love and pity toward a wretched race
Apostate, disobedient, rebel, lost!
Well spake that Savior Son while yet He lived
A heavenly exile here on earth — He now
About to suffer at the hands of whom
He came to save — making the sum of sin
Consist in not believing upon Him.
Not to believe on such as Jesus Christ
Seen living, the exemplar of all good,
That, that, was sin indeed. Yet greater sin,
Yea, sin inclusive and conclusive, this —
Not to believe on Christ raised from the dead!"

Paul interrupted his discourse with pause.
He eased the pressure on his heart with prayer,
While Krishna slowly, softly, sadly said:
'Sin as transgression of a law supreme;
Law as expression of a living Will;
Nay, the existence of a living Will
Sovereign over an ordered universe;
Much more, a Heart behind the Will to feel
Pity and love, such pity and such love,
Not idle passion but at work to save,
Save at vicarious cost so great — these thoughts,

Ill canst thou know how new they are to me,
How strange! Sin, sin — and sinner I, for this,
That I do not believe on him!

"But thou,
Tell me, What is it to believe on him?
I willingly believe that he was good,
Was wise, was gentle, gracious, merciful."
"Believe that he was what he claimed to be,"
Said Paul, "absolute lord of life and thought
To all men, and to thee. Acknowledge Him
Thy Lord; believing is obeying here.
To whom He Master is, to them is He
Also a Savior; trust thyself to Him."
"A fearful act of self-surrender thou,
O Paul," said Krishna, "thus proposest to me.
Take Jesus for my lord in life and thought,
Absolute lord as thou hast strongly said it,
That might be, for what were it but exchange
Of masters, Buddha left for Jesus; true,
Never such claim of mastership made he,
Our Buddha, as thou sayest thy Jesus makes —
But to commit myself into the hands
Of any, whosoever he may be,

To be saved — saved from what, to what, how
saved?"—

With sudden turn on Paul, Krishna thus spoke,
The gentleness which was his manner, now
To almost fierceness changed, so vehement
Was the revulsion and revolt expressed.
"Am I so lost I cannot save myself?"
He added, when he could command his tones
To speak with full becoming courtesy —
An inexpugnable repulsion yet
Shown of the answer that he thus invoked.

Calmly, but without effort to be calm,
"O, yea," said Paul, "so lost, and worse than so;
So lost thou dost not wish to save thyself;
Nay, dost not know thou needest to be saved.
It is the sad besotment deep of sin,
Wherein not thou alone but all of us
Since Adam, the first man, are sunk and lost.
We are dead in sin, this even from our first breath,
And, like the dead, know not that we are dead,
And, like the dead, care not to live again,
Nor, more than they, could, if we would, revive.
A dreadful doom of helpless living death!

Helpless, yet hopeless not, blesséd be God!
Yea, there is hope, albeit not in ourselves;
Christ is a power of life that overflows
To all that will make ready a way for Him
To enter by the gladsome gates of will.
He quickens whom He will, but will not quicken
Save who will say to Him, 'Lord, quicken me!'
A paradox, sayest thou, hard to be solved?
Yea, more, outright impossibility—
With man impossibility, but not
With God; with God, all things are possible."

"Thou makest this thing 'sin,'" the Indian said,
"Such evil as is more miserable far
Than misery's self. Who taught thee this? 'Sin,'
'sin'—
Is it not perhaps some specter of the mind
Only, unreal as horrible, which thou
Hast conjured up from nothing to thyself
In thy lone brooding on the riddle of things?"

Paul hearing this thought backward of the time
When Porcius Festus brusquely said to him
In public presence: 'Paul, thou art mad; thy long
Deep pouring over books turns wild thy wits.'

With himself musing: 'One in his right mind
Thus to be judged distraught by those distraught!'
He answered: "Yea, that is a wile I know
Of Satan's playing on this human heart
Of ours, deceitful as it is above
All things and desperately wicked, yet
Insanely cunning in complicity
Against itself—a wile I know too well
To cheat us into thinking naught of sin.
A bugbear of the morbid conscience, sin!
I might myself have been, I cannot know,
Lulled by this lie into false fatal peace;
But the Lord Christ Himself appeared to me
In light like lightning though a hundred fold
Keener, shot suddenly from out a clear
Sky at midnoon, and called me by my name,
The name that then I bore; 'Saul, Saul,' He said,
'Why dost thou persecute Me?' 'Thee,' said I,
'Who art thou, Lord?' And He, 'Jesus I am
Whom thou dost persecute.'

"That moment first,
In its true hideous native aspect shown,
Sin was revealed to me. I saw it wear

A face of horrible malignity
Gnashing its teeth on Jesus, the One Man
Who sinned not ever and yet died for sin,
Died for the sin that slew Him, for my sin
That slew Him on the bitter cross, that still
Was slaying Him afresh — who died for *me*.
I found the truth and meaning of those words
By Jesus from the imminent verge of death
Spoken, that not believing upon Him
Was the one sin. When the ideal man
Is shown us, then to know Him not for such
Betokens us how besotted! — beyond hope;
But if the ideal man be Son of God
And bring us out of heaven a word from Him,
Not to receive the message, nay, to flout
The messenger himself as I had done,
Yea, was that moment doing when the light
I spoke of fell on me — what height, what depth
Of sin! O, sin's exceeding sinfulness!
And yet, not so even is the measure full.
For God in testimony of His Son
Put forth the working of His mighty power
And raised Him from the dead, exalting Him
To the right hand of glory with Himself.

Christ then, there sitting by His Father's side
And with Him reigning, victor over death
And over him that had the power of death,
The devil, sent thence the Holy Spirit down
Hither to us to lead us into truth.
The Holy Spirit in thy heart, O Krishna,
Grieve Him not, send Him not away from thee!
It was His secret prompting made thee take
That spring toward God at mention of His name.
Yield to Him, He desires thy good, consent
To be convinced of sin — sin still committed
Till thou believe on Jesus Christ as Lord;
And now a sin against the Holy Ghost!"

Solemn the words, spoken solemnly by Paul;
They wrought an awe in Krishna hearing them.
The sense indeed was half not understood;
Yet not the less, almost it seemed the more,
They touched him to the quickest in his soul.
Paul too was awed and did not further speak,
Thinking, 'Let me beware not to obtrude
Myself untimely between God and man!'
Nay, even he would that Krishna were alone,
To wrestle in that solemn solitude

Wherein needs must at last the human spirit
Ever transact the awful mystery
Of its own reconcilement with its God.
Yet Paul so wishing still would not withdraw,
He might inhospitable seem or seem
Too conscious of his fellow's inward strife;
He prayed in silence with unutterable
Strong yearning of desire quickened with hope:
'Let Krishna win the victory of defeat!'

The Indian soon with gesture of farewell
Unspoken, which meant thanks and courtesy
Habitual, but meant also not habitual
Appeal for sympathy in felt helplessness,
As who should say, 'Pray, pray for me,' retired.

'Impossible!' so he murmured to himself;
'I would have paid a hundred million years
Of pain and patience and unceasing toil
To buy escape from being and misery.
Now to accept deliverance as a gift,
Acknowledging that I cannot purchase it—
I sicken within me at the very thought!
Deliverance not from being but misery—
If *that* could be! Fulness of life, not death!

Aye, that were better — were it possible!
I do not wish to cease from consciousness
If consciousness can be, apart from woe.
O Thou who must be, Thou whom since I heard
Thy name I cannot doubt more than I doubt
Myself, Thou, God, is this thy word indeed,
That I am lost in sin as not believing
On that man Jesus for mine only Lord?
Is he thy Son? Shall I trust all to him?
All, all, as if I were a little child?

'What is it in my heart that answers, Yea?
Is it Thou, O Holy Spirit? If it be
Thou, and none other and naught else than Thou
Then certify Thyself, give me a sign!
Ah, but I know, I know. O heart within,
Thou wilt not cheat thyself thus! Thou and I,
We know full well when God speaks it is He,
He and none other. Other none than Thou,
Paul's God, and mine, and mine, and mine, O yea,
Who but my God could speak thus closely to me?
O Buddha, Buddha, trusted long in vain!
In whom I took my refuge once, behold,
My house of refuge then supposed in thee

Is melted into ruin round about me.
I am a naked soul, unhoused, disclad ;
O God, receive me, lo, I come to Thee ;
Forgive my sin that I have not believed
Earlier in Christ thy Son, whom now I take
To be my Lord henceforth. I trust to Him
To save me and I cannot save myself.
But He, He can and will, thanks to His name ;
Thanks to thy name, Lord Jesus, I am thine,
And Thou art mine, my Savior as my Lord!

'Where is my pride, which was so dear to me,
My pride, and my vain confidence of strength?
Gone, yea, and my desire even gone to be
Myself my own redeemer and not owe
Redemption as a debt of gratitude
To any ; sense of debt is sweet to me
Now, and my heart is meekly glad to know
That I henceforth am not my own, but His
Who died to save me from myself and sin.
Nirvâna, which I erst befooled myself
To deem desirable, what dreary doom
Were it! Instead of life, and love, and joy,
True peace, and ever-springing gratitude

Growing greater every moment, like a stream
Increasing every moment to the sea
With fresh floods from fresh tributaries poured—
Instead of this, blank death and nothingness!
End unattainable, I now can see,
Even were it good. To lose this power to think
And suffer and enjoy, to quench in night
Utter, unending, reason's starry lamp,
And hope's, and memory's, and be naught at all!
I shudder backward from the crumbling brink
Of such annihilation of myself
Imagined only, and I eager spring
Endeavoring upward toward that different good
Assured to me and native now I know,
The prospect of eternal life with joy.'

So Krishna mused, was grateful, and aspired,
Rescued from the abyss to hope of heaven.

But the new life of love within his heart,
Of love and love's delicious gratitude,
Swelled with sweet pain to unappeasable
Desire of vent and overflow in word
Or deed to testify itself abroad.
When, the next day, the daily trysting-time

Drew them that loved the Lord together for prayer,
The Indian, who by fellow instinct now
Divined the secret of those gatherings, came
And sought to be admitted of the band.
They welcomed him with hospitable joy,
Which borrowed tears from sorrow to express
Itself in silence when he spoke and said :

"O friends, receive me, for I am of you,
Redeemed by your Redeemer, Christ the Lord.
I love Him, and I know it is because
He first loved me and taught me how to love.
This love that wells in me and overflows
My being thus, it is not mine I know,
But His, or only as He makes it, mine.
I love you all in Him, and feel that ye
In Him likewise love me. He has unlocked
The gates of speech ; He makes the dumb to speak.
And now I pray you tell me, is there not
Some thing ye know, some little thing perhaps,
For I am meek and lowly like a child
And I do not aspire to things above
My measure, which indeed I know is small,
Some little simple thing that I can do

For Jesus, just because He wishes it
And for no other reason in the world
Than only that, to testify to Him
In act and testify to all that see
How much I love Him, and how much desire
To be henceforth His servant all in all?
I should be glad to do this if I might
With no delay at all, I am in haste.
I know from all that I have learned through you
And from the lovely feeling in my heart,
This eager impulse to make haste and be
The perfect image of your Lord and mine —
I know thus that there is an endless joy
Before me of obedience to His will
In beautiful behavior like His own
And all conformity to what is fair
Whether in temper, thought, wish, word, or deed,
Or whatsoever else is life or being —
A boundless possibility of bliss
Awaiting and inviting me — whereto
All hail and welcome, be my footsteps fleet
To run forever up this shining way! —
Yet am I not contented till I hear
Whether there be not bidden some thing besides

Of gracious privilege from Christ to those
Who love Him as I love Him, which such may,
In the first freshness of new birth, at once
Do for an ease and comfort to their love."

Wonder with gladness filled all hearts that heard,
When Krishna, he of words so slow and few,
Flowed like a river thus from frost unbound.
And Paul said: "'Be baptized,' Lord Jesus taught,
First privilege of obedience to His will
In outward visible act offered to those
Who have before invisibly obeyed
Him inwardly and taken Him for Lord.
Thou therefore, brother, if thou wilt, shalt be
Forthwith baptized according to His word.
Buried with Him by baptism into death
Thou wilt be, that as Christ was from the dead
Raised by the glory of the Father so
Thou also mayst henceforth forever walk
In a new life."

Within the spacious halls
Of Publius there was found a laver large
Which, by the master of the mansion put
At Paul's command, with water pure was filled;

And therein Krishna was straightway baptized.
But not by Paul's hands. "For Christ sent me
forth,"
He said, "not to baptize but to proclaim
The gospel of obedience to mankind."
So Aristarchus, for that office named
By Paul, baptized the Indian. He went down
Joyous into that liquid grave with Christ
To rise with Him in resurrection thence.
"Because thou art disciple now become,"
To Krishna speaking, Aristarchus said,
"And because Christ hath so commanded us,
Lo, I baptize thee thus into the name,
The one name, of the Father, of the Son,
And of the Holy Ghost. Amen!"

"Amen!"
Said Krishna, issuing from his watery tomb
As one new-born like Lazarus from the dead.

"If thou, then," Paul said, taking Krishna's hand
For welcome, "If thou be indeed with Christ
Risen from the dead, I charge thee seek those things
Which are above where Christ ascended sits
On the right hand of God the Father throned.

Endeavor upward toward what heavenly is,
Not suffer thine affection here to cling;
We must not grovel where we ought to climb.
Reckon that when Christ died thou diedst with
Him,
And that thy life is hid with Christ in God.
When Christ our life shall manifested be,
Then manifested thou shalt be with Him
In glory.

"For this life we live on earth
Is as the insect's life in chrysalis.
The creature shut in chrysalis awaits
The promise of the sun's approach in spring;
The sun is his true life, and when the sun
Returns rejoicing hither from the south,
Then cracks the chrysalis that bound him in,
And, blossoming out in wings, he disimprisoned
Springs a new creature forth, and sails abroad
In beauty on the bosom of the air—
A living parable of that which we
Shall undergo of glorious change when Christ,
Our Sun, at His return revisits us.
Haste, then, to put to death those things in thee,

Pride, unbelief, self-will, vain trust in self,
Excess of self-regard, whatever else
Belongs to this thine earthly state of being
And cannot overlive into the life
Of glory to be thine forever in heaven —
All these things put to death, and nourish rather
Faith, hope, love, joy, upward desire and pure,
The spirit of forgetfulness of self —
Self-will become obedience unto God,
Presumption changed to sweet humility,
Thanksgiving like a fountain from the heart
Springing, with a delicious tremble deep
Reflected to the center of the soul,
In eager exultation up to God:
These and like things are of the heavenly mind;
Cherish them thou with heedful husbandry.
So shalt thou grow full-summed those buoyant wings
Which, when Christ comes again, shall bear thee up
To meet Him in the air and soar with Him
Immeasurable heights above all height
Into the heaven of heavens to be with God
Forever and forever safe in bliss.

"Dost thou ask, How do this? I answer thee,

Be thy whole life obedience to His will
Who lived and died and lives forevermore
To save thee ransomed by His blood from sin.
Yea, whatsoever thou henceforth shalt do,
Whether in thought or word or deed, do all
Not from thyself, nor for thyself, but all
As living in the person and the name,
As living therein only, of the Lord
Jesus, to God the Father giving thanks
By Him.

"And now to Him that loved us, Him
That washed us from our sins in His own blood,
And made us kings and priests to God His
Father—
To Him dominion be, and glory, given
For ever and for evermore! Amen!"

Krishna soon after came to Paul and said:
"The sense of resurrection power I feel
Within me working to sustain my will
In striving upward as thou bidst toward God
I take it as a warrant and a proof
That Christ lives and exerts it from above.
I need no longer any testimony

Other than what I have within myself,
That He rose from the dead to die no more.
This new life that is mine I draw from Him;
It is because He lives I thus can live;
Yet gladly would I hear from Mary's lips
(Not now with curious ear, and unbelief)
Her story of the rising of the Lord.
I wake not seldom in the depths of night,
A kind of leaven of light breaks through my sleep,
As if the glory of the Lord around
Me made untimely morning for mine eyes.
Better, I trow, than our good Publius,
I shall peruse the daily prophecies
Of weather in the midnight wind and sky.
So he consents and I beforehand am
With him in waking, as I trust to be,
Let me bring tidings when my vigils next
Discern the promise of a smiling dawn
Tempered to vernal warmth. We then can meet,
As late the hint was, ere the rising sun,
To hear from Mary, while the morning breaks
And the fresh splendors of new-wakened day
Lighten the world, how Jesus over death
Triumphed, and spoiled the princedom of the grave."

"So it shall be, my Krishna," Paul said, glad
At heart that such desire, so purified
With faith, and joy, and sense of partnership
In all things by the Lord of life bestowed,
Possessed the Indian. And the days went by.

BOOK XX.

EUTHANASY.

Ruth and Mary Magdalené waking very early talk with one another having not yet risen, and Mary discloses a placid premonition that she has of her own imminent death. They thus engaged, a signal sound from without is heard in notes from Stephen on his pipe. The summons is for the meeting proposed to hear Mary's story of the resurrection.

The company repair to a hilltop of easy access and goodly prospect, where after a matin prayer from Paul Mary tells her story. She has scarcely ended, when she gently sinks in death. Paul on occasion of this speaks comfortingly, not without tears of personal sorrow for Mary's loss, of the resurrection awaiting the dead in Christ.

Meantime Simon the sorcerer having observed from a distance the meeting of the Christians puts his own sinister interpretation on what occurred, which, so interpreted, he reports, to Paul's disadvantage, to Felix and Drusilla, with suggestion of use that may be made of it in evidence against the apostle at Rome.

At sunset of the same day the Christians gather to the burial of Mary on the spot where she died, and Paul describes the promised return of Jesus to accomplish the triumphant rapture and resurrection of the saints.

EUTHANASY.

The stars that with the setting of the sun
Rose in the east had climbed the highest heaven
And from their top of culmination now
With steadfast gaze were looking steeply down
Through spaces pure, or lucid depths of sky
Pure as pure spaces, blanched to perfect blue,
When Mary, waking, softly spoke to Ruth.
They in one chamber lodged, and were so nigh
Each other in their couches side by side
(With Rachel also in close neighborhood)
That they could trust themselves to mutual speech
If need were in the night or if the wish
Prompted, nor hazard to disturb the rest
Wherein Eunicé, nigh them both bestowed,
Lay locked securely in those faster bonds
Which bind the young and innocent asleep.

"Ruth," Mary said, so softly that the sound
Was like a pulse of silence, "art asleep?"
"Nay, all awake to hear what thou wouldst say,"
Ruth answered, in a murmur soft as hers.

She had slept, but she instantly awoke
When Mary scarcely more than thought her name.

This was the wont between them; for Ruth knew
That her kinswoman Mary bore her life
But as a dewdrop trembling on a leaf
That any little waft of wind may scatter;
And so she held herself even when she slept
Still in a kind of vigil not to miss
A breath from Mary that might call for her.

"Thou wilt not sorrow should I leave thee soon,"
Said Mary, with the tone of one who soothed
Far rather than of one who soothed would be.
"I have a premonition that the end
To me of things upon the earth is nigh.
Thou knowest how frail the hold whereby I hold
To life here and how ready I am to go
Hence whensoever He shall call my name,
As once He called it I remember well,
So call it yet again, bidding me come.
I have wavered between this and that in thought;
Now thinking: 'He will surely hither soon
Return, so as we saw Him forty days
After His resurrection wrapt in cloud

Ascending from the mount in Galilee—
Return, and take us all unto Himself;'
But then again I think: 'Perhaps for me
He will anticipate that destined hour
And call me on a sudden thither hence.'
Let not mine ear be heavy if He call!

"O Ruth, I think I have within my heart
Foretokening sent that He will call to-day;
A fluttering in my blood admonishes me.
I should be thankful if I might once more
Ere going bear some witness to His name!
For Krishna's sake, too; ever a soul sincere
He seemed to me, but he would listen now
With other ear, eager to drink the truth."
"Yea, and that may be," Ruth said, "not once more
But often if the will of God be so.
God grant it! For indeed I could but grieve
To lose thee from my side; grieve, though I saw
Heaven open to receive thee, as to Stephen,
My Stephen, it opened—with the glory of God
Full shown Him in the face of Christ the Lord!

"Yet so the weather promises this night

The morning will, I think, be heavenly fair
And mild, and haply thou indeed shalt greet
Full soon thy wished-for chance of testimony.
Thou wilt remember we were all to meet
On such a morning as this sure will be
And hear thee tell thy story of the Lord's
Victorious resurrection from the dead
Just then when day is glorying over night."

Those women with each other communing so,
The morning hastened, and — now nigh to break
Full splendor but with brilliance soft and chaste
Over the welcoming world both land and sea —
Mary and Ruth, with Rachel at the sign
Awakening and Eunicé fresh as dawn,
Heard from without a matin signal sound
Blown with the breath of Stephen on his reed —
Token of tryst by all well understood,
While secretly entrusted with a thrill
To one heart that the others knew not of.

The Indian joyful to his host had said:
"I shall forestall thee, O my Publius,
I know it by my heart within me wise,

In hailing the selectest dawn to break,
And fittest, for our meeting on the shore
To hear from Hebrew Mary what she yet
Reserves to tell us of her rising Lord:
So, if thou please, I will myself betimes
Awake thee when the hour I wait for comes."
Publius thus roused, he in his turn awaked
Stephen, who rallied with his pipe the rest;
But Paul, with Stephen in one chamber sleeping
Woke, as his nephew woke, when Publius called.

The new wine of the vernal weather filled
The golden cup of morning to the brim,
And those blithe wakers drank deep draughts of it;
But other morning bathed their souls with light.
They to a hill of gentle rise repaired
That sloped its eastern side into the main
Thence rippling up in spiral terraces
By playful Nature round about it wound:
Here goodly prospect over sea and shore,
From a well-sheltered seat, invited them.
Before they sat, Paul stretched his hands toward heaven

And prayed: "Thou who didst out of darkness
make
Light dawn on chaos, and who day by day
Dost kindle morning from the shades of night,
Thanks to thy name for this fair spring of dawn!
Dawn Thou into our hearts, and dayspring there
Make with the shining of thy face on us
Shown milder in the face of Christ thy Son!"—
Then, to his fellows turning, added this:
"We owe it to Krishna that we thus are here;
His wishes waked him, and, as was agreed,
He waked us that we might prevent the morn
To celebrate the rising of the Lord.
Krishna knew not, what yet by happy chance
Has now befallen, if aught befall by chance,
That we, upon the first day of the week
Meeting, meet on the day when Christ arose,
The Lord's day, day peculiarly His own.
We listen, Mary, tell us of that morn."

Then Mary, her fair face like morning, white
With pureness not with pallor, spoke and said:
"It was not hope, nor faith—both faith and hope
Had died within us when our Master died—

Not hope, not faith, but love, and memory,
And sorrow, and desire to testify
Our sense of everlasting debt to Him,
That, early in the morning of the day
Third following the day wherein He suffered,
Brought me — with Mary, James's mother, joined —
Likewise Salomé, to the garden where
They had laid Him in a rock-hewn sepulcher.
We took sweet spices to embalm the flesh
Which late for robe the Lord of life had worn.
We wondered as we went, 'But who will roll
The great stone back for us that closes up
The doorway to the tomb?' Yet went we on,
To find the stone already rolled away;
For there had been a mighty earthquake throe,
And a descended angel of the Lord
With easy strength in his celestial grace
Had rolled away the stone, and on it sat.
His aspect was like lightning, and snow-white
His dazzling vesture shone. The keepers shook,
The keepers that the Jewish rulers set
To watch the grave — these for sheer terror shook
And sank into a helpless swoon like death.
But unto us that awful angel said:

"Ye, fear not; for I know ye come to seek
Jesus the crucified; He is not here,
For He is risen according to His word.
Come, see the empty place where the Lord lay."

"I heard and saw with a bewildered wit;
And though I afterward remembered all,
I did not at the moment understand
Well anything save that the sepulcher
Was empty of the body of the Lord.
This I told the disciples, sorrowing:
I ran to tell them, and they, running, came
To find it so as I had made report.
Those went away, perplexed and sad at heart:
But as for me, I lingered by the tomb
And wept; I could have wept my heart away.
I thought: 'And so I may not even anoint —
There would be comfort, something like a sense
Of healing to that holy wounded flesh,
If I might salve those dead wounds with sweet
spice —
I may not even anoint His body dead!
They have taken it away, I know not whither.
Alas, alas, and woe is me!' My tears

Were falling like a shower of rain the while,
But I stooped weeping, and with veiled eyes looked
Into the open sepulcher and saw
Two angels sitting there, vested in white,
One at the head, the other at the feet,
Where late the body of the Lord had lain.

"It was a heavenly spectacle to see,
Those shining-vested angels sitting there
With posture so composed and face serene!
Yet would I rather then have seen the Lord,
Or seen His body wounded from the cross;
But if those angels knew that this was so,
Their blame of me was very gently spoken:
'Woman, why weepest thou?' I sobbed reply:
'Because they have taken away my Lord, and where
They have laid Him I know not.'

"With that I turned
Me back, I think I should have gone away,
But I saw one I knew not, standing there,
Who also spake, 'Woman, why weepest thou?'
Distraught I took him for the gardener,
And half I did not see him for my tears,
And I made answer from my eager thought:

'O, sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me
Where thou hast laid Him and I will take Him
thence
Away.' Then Jesus, for it Jesus was,
Uttered one word, no more; 'Mary!' He said.
I turned toward Him, but all I said was this:
'Rabboni!' For it was a Hebrew word
Sprang quickest to my lips; 'Master' it means—"
This with a glance toward Krishna Mary said.

The Indian dropped his eyes as with a kind
Of sudden conscious shame confusing him
To feel her eyes that instant meet his own
And know his own were charged with other look
Than ever woman drew from him before.
In her unconscious pure serenity,
Mary—her momentary glance toward one,
In equal gaze on all together sheathed—
Went on, no pause, yet with some air of muse
Tingeing her reminiscence as she said:
"Perhaps I had an impulse which the Lord
Saw, to assure myself with touch of hand
Or even to cling to Him, I hardly know;
'Nay,' He said tenderly, 'I am not yet,'

Said He, 'ascended to the Father; thou,
Go to my brethren and tell them that I
Ascend unto my Father and your Father
And my God and your God.' And this I did.

"O, the deep joy, the deep and solemn joy,
Of knowing that the Lord was risen indeed!
And the solemnity was almost more
Than even the joy; we trembled and rejoiced.
He was so awful in His majesty
After His rising from the dead! Yea, sweet
Was He, beyond all language to express;
But sweetness was with awfulness in Him
So qualified, the sweetness could not be
Enough to overcome the awfulness;
Gazing on Him we trembled and rejoiced.

"He forty days appeared and disappeared
By turns before us, passing through shut doors
Unhindered, yet sometimes partaking food—
A paradox of spirit or of flesh,
The resurrection body of the Lord!
Ensample of our bodies that shall be,
And witness of the wondrous wisdom God's,
And power to work the counsels of His will

By many secret potencies of things,
Who spirit of matter could capacious make,
As matter make to spirit permeable!

"Those forty days in which He showed Himself
After such fashion to His chosen few
Nigh ended, we withdrew to Galilee
Where He appointed He would meet His own —
More than five hundred we were mustered there
Upon a mountain top that well we knew.
Here He was glorious in majesty,
The Son of God become from Son of Man;
Hushed to obedient awe, we heard Him speak.
He said: 'Lo, all authority is given
To Me, whether in heaven or on the earth.
Forth, therefore, ye, among all nations go,
Making disciples and baptizing them
Into the name, the one name, of the Father,
And of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;
Teaching them to observe all things that I
Commanded you, neglecting naught of all:
Behold, I am with you ever to the end.'

"Thence to Jerusalem and Bethany.
Here from a chosen spot on Olivet

Jesus, His hands uplifted as He blessed us,
Rose heavenward, but He blessed us still in rising,
Until a cloud enwrapt Him from our sight."

The upward look of Mary saying this,
Her fixéd, eager, upward-yearning look,
Failed, and her face grew white as if the blood
Were shamed to stain that heavenly purity.
All saw the change she suffered, and were awed.
Mary's voice faltered, but she brokenly
Went on in utterance such as if she spoke
Out of another world just reached from this:
"That cloud — I seem to see it now again —
Or something swims between to dim my sight.
Those angels said that He would yet return
So as we saw Him then ascend to heaven —
Is He now come? I hear as if a voice,
His, His, the same that in the garden spake
To me calling my name, 'Mary!' It says
Now, 'Hither, Mary!' Yea, Lord Jesus, I
Know Thee, and come. At last! At last! Farewell!"

Mary such words uttered with failing breath,
Her eyes withdrawn from vision of things here.

Her body — which in gentle rest reclined
On her kinswoman Ruth supporting her
When her strength failed — she left, winging her way
Hence, as the lark soars from his groundling nest
Into the morning sky to meet the sun.

With a communicated quietude
Of spirit — which into their gesture passed
Making it seem habitual, no surprise,
Scarce sorrow, hinted, perturbation none,
But reverence and love ineffable —
Not speaking, Ruth and Rachel decently
Composed the body to a look of rest
In sleep on the sweet earth, the stainless sky
Bending in benediction over her
And the bright sun just risen touching the face
To an auroral beauty with his beams.

"She has gone hence," Paul said, "to be with
Christ,
Which is far better. See the peace expressed
In the unmoving hands on the stilled heart,
The form relapsed oblivious on the ground,
And the face fixed in transport of repose!
Surpassing beauty! But corruptible;

Faint image of the beauty which shall be
When this seed planted springs in heavenly bloom
And mortal takes on immortality!
Think when we sow this beauty in the dust,
That which we sow is earthly though so fair;
But that will be celestial which shall hence
In the bright resurrection season spring.

"Ye know that when the husbandman entrusts
His seed-grain to the soil he does not sow
That body which shall be, but kernels bare
To which God gives a body as He will;
From the wheat sown there springs a blade of green
Unlike the wheat and far more beautiful.
So is the resurrection that awaits
Mary, our sister; this corruptible
Will put on incorruption in that day,
And Christ will fashion it anew more fair,
After the body of His glory changed!

"Ye do not ask, but some have doubting asked,
'How are the dead raised up, and in what form
Of body do they come?' Not surely such
As they within the tomb were laid away.
There sleeps a natural body in the dust;

There wakes a spiritual body purified
From every imperfection of the flesh.
Whatever glorious beauty here was worn
Is worn a changed more glorious beauty there.

"His proper glory to the sun belongs,
And the moon has her glory, and the stars
Each in his own peculiar glory shines:
The body of the resurrection so
Has its enduements proper to itself,
Capacities, adjustments, attributes,
Other than we know here — though shadowed forth
Obscurely in the body that the Lord
After His resurrection wore — such high
Transfigurations of the faculties
Belonging to the body of this flesh
As man's imagination cannot dream!

"O clay, that late seemed Mary!" — and therewith
The tears that would not longer be stayed back
Burst from Paul's eyes and fell a sunlit shower,
While all the rest beholding wept with Paul —
"Form, for her sake, our well-belovéd, dear,
Must we then leave thee in the dust of earth?
But not as thus we leave thee wilt thou rise!

Thou in corruption wilt lie waiting here,
But thou shalt rise, to incorruption changed;
Thou wilt sleep darkling underneath the clod,
But thence in glory shalt thou waking burst;
In weakness buried, thou shalt rise in power.
Mary the image of the earthy bore,
She shall the image of the heavenly bear:
Comfort yourselves, belovéd, with such hope."

Paul these triumphal words of prophecy
Uttered with streaming tears that testified
The sorrow in him at the heart of joy;
And they all wept with Paul, in fellowship
Of pathos at sweet strife with glorying hope.

A little leave for silent tears, and Paul
Said: "Bide ye here until the evenfall,
Or some of you by turns as need of rest,
Of food, of change, allows the privilege
Of watching by this sacred dust asleep.
I will meantime desire from Publius
Permission to prepare her resting-place
For Mary here upon the selfsame spot
That she has hallowed for us by dying here;
And we at set of sun will bury her."

Now Publius had, with Sergius Paulus too,
And Krishna — those, and the centurion—
Silently, in that silent time of tears,
Retired; they with one instinct felt that here
Were love and grief that needed privacy
From witness even of moistened eyes like theirs.
But Krishna went apart from all, and bowed
Himself together motionless and wept.

While those sat weeping, and these last withdrew
Refraining not the sympathetic tear,
A different scene passed elsewhere in the isle.
Simon, the sorcerer, sought and found access
To Felix and Drusilla and said to them:
"I roused this night an hour before the dawn,
My sleep disturbed with signs in dreams of you.
Some secret prescience urged me out of doors,
And I went wandering forth with no clear thought
Whither, but felt my footsteps onward drawn,
Until I gained an overlooking height
Of hill, whence, ranging round me with mine eyes,
I saw a dozen people more or less,
Women as seemed with men, a motley train,
Walking thus early, why I could not guess;

They tended toward a hillock neighboring mine.
I, heeding to be hid from them the while,
Crept up as near them as I safely could.
Paul was among them, chief, though not the guide·
As guide our worthy friend Sir Publius served.
That Sergius Paulus, with his Indian friend,
Krishna they call him, the centurion too,
Were of the company; as for the rest,
Count up the tale of Paul's companionship,
They were all there.

"After these reached the point
Where they made pause, the first thing that befell
Was Paul in menace lifting up those hands
Of his and therewith muttering magic words.
I could not hear them, but the tone I knew,
As too I knew that gesture of the hands.
I thought of how he conjured with his spell
Of uncouth baleful words at Cæsarea!
Paul got all seated; but one sat apart,
The destined victim of his wicked wiles,
A woman she, that Mary Magdalené,
Like an accused impaled to make defence.
Paul seemed to say to her, 'Speak, if thou wilt,'

Whereon the woman with a pleading voice,
But hopeless, breaking into moan at last,
Made her apology — of course in vain.
The spell that Paul had cast upon her wrought,
And she sank lifeless at his feet. So once
A spell from Peter at Jerusalem
With Ananias and Sapphira wrought
Killing them out of hand."

"But wherefore this?"
Drusilla doubted. "Also wherefore that?"

"Real reason, or pretended, wilt thou have?"
Said Simon with his air of oracle.
"Both," said Drusilla shortly, answering him.
"Well, the pretended reason," Simon said,
"To Peter, was hot zeal for righteousness.
Seems Ananias and Sapphira lied;
A venial lie, they set a little short
The price they had received for certain lands
Or other property sold by them late
In the behoof of Peter and his crew.
Peter would none of that; the revenues
To be extorted from his dupes would shrink

With such prevarications once in vogue :
There hast thou the real reason for his crime.

"As for this last case, Paul's, I can but guess
What his pretended reason was. Indeed
Perhaps pretended reason there was none.
It may be he preferred to have it seem,
To all except his special followers,
A case of sudden death from natural cause.
Or again, likelier, he alleged some crime
Against her, sacrilege or blasphemy,
Secret, thence lacking proof but capable
Of being proved upon her by his art.
He would pronounce a spell of magic power,
Then let her talk and try to clear herself :
Meanwhile, if she were guilty as he thought,
The spell would work and punish her with death,
But remain harmless were she innocent.
Guesses, but plausible ; still it would be
Sufficiently like Paul if he devised
A blank mere demonstration for the sake
Of those outside spectators of the scene,
Simply in order to impress on them
His power in magic, and win their applause.

It would at the same time inspire with awe
Those dupes of his, and faster bind their bonds.
Yet a particular reason intermixed
Doubtless with general motives for his crime;
Some insubordination, it may be,
On Mary Magdalené's part toward him,
Had stung him to inflict this punishment."

"What of it all?" Drusilla coldly said.
"Nothing," said Simon; "just a pretty tale!
Only I thought it might perhaps subserve
Lady Drusilla's purpose yonder at Rome,
To have a crime convenient to her hand,
A fresh crime, and a flagrant, she could charge
To Paul's account to make more sure his doom."

'Why, aye,' Drusilla thought, 'one that involves
Sergius Paulus, renegade, and that
Too complaisant centurion, the whole crew
Indeed present to be spectators there
And not protesting, hence accomplices
All of a crime they might have stayed in act.
As to the matter of a sudden death
With circumstance attending such and such,
Surplus of testimony was to hand

For that; as to the matter of the means
Employed, magic — Simon magician was,
And he, as expert witness, should suffice.
If any question as to *him* arose,
Drusilla should be equal to the need;
I would vouch for him to the emperor.
Nothing would please me better than to try
On him the virtue of my sponsorship!'

So the proud woman swiftly in mute muse
Slid to the goal she wished. Nay, scarce a pause
Seeming to have occurred before she spoke,
Already had her formless thought forecast
The triumphs over Nero she would win
With her voluptuous beauty wielded so
As she could wield it through her equal wit,
When she to Simon answered absently:
"True, worthy Simon; something such might
chance;
Be ready to make good at need thy part."
This as dismissal; and the sorcerer went.
Felix had moody sat with never a word.

And now the cloudless splendor of the day
Was softly toward a cloudless sunset waned,

When round an open grave upon that hill
Were gathered those who mourned for Mary dead;
Publius was there, and Julius, with the rest.
They with all reverence lifted the fair form,
Wrapped round about with linen clean and white,
And laid it like a seed within the ground;
They spread it with a coverlet of soil
Which falling through the farewell sunset beams
Seemed leavened to lie more lightly on the dead:
The earth with such a treasure in her breast
Was sweeter, and they almost yearned toward it.
Yet upward rather soon they turn their eyes
As once those upward gazed in Galilee
Seeing their Lord ascend in cloud to heaven —
While thus Paul, he too thither looking, said:
"Concerning her who sleeps here, think aright;
For we must sorrow not as others do
Who have no hope. We have a hope. Our hope
Is, that if Jesus died and rose again,
Even so them likewise who in Jesus sleep
Will God bring with Him. Yea, I say to you
By the command and promise of the Lord
If we survive to see the Lord return
We shall not so forestall our sleeping friend

In springing toward Him as He hither comes.
For with a shout the Lord Himself from heaven
Will hither come descending with the voice
Of the archangel and the trump of God.
First shall those dead in Christ arise, and then
We, if we linger living till He come,
(Transfigured in the twinkling of an eye
When the trump sounded to our heavenly guise)
Will be with them together in the clouds
Caught up in instant rapture from the earth
To meet the Lord descended in the air:
So shall we be forever with the Lord.
With these things comfort ye yourselves, and each
Comfort the other.

"And all comfort me!"
Paul added, with a breaking voice, and tears;
But quick he rallied for those others' sake
And his victorious tone recovered quite,
Looking down, like a warrior on a foe
Trampled into the dust beneath his feet—
So looking down upon that vanquished grave,
Paul almost chanted in heroic rhythm
This lyric exultation calmed to praise:

"O death, where is thy sting? Thy victory where,
O grave? Thanks be to God who giveth us,
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, the victory!"

Paul indeed craved the touch of human love,
To stay him with a healing sense of help,
And medicine to sorrow; but in part
It was for his companions' own behoof
He had desired their fellowship of cheer;
He knew well that to comfort was of all
Ways the way surest to be comforted.

BOOK XXI.

ARRIVAL.

The day following, the shipwrecked company embark on a vessel that had wintered at Melita and sail for Puteoli. The islanders give Paul and his companions a grateful farewell of good wishes and of presents for their cheer. With Felix and Drusilla goes as a fresh addition to their train a Phrygian runaway slave whom Syrus, a young slave of Felix's, has befriended and has devised thus to get safely to Rome. Stephen is made confidant of this plan, and becoming interested in the runaway introduces him to Paul. The foot journey from Puteoli to Rome is accomplished, the approach to that city being made along the Appian Way. Various reflections are inspired in Paul by this experience and by the sight of the metropolis itself. At Rome, the Phrygian runaway slave goes to Paul's quarters, merged in the daily concourse that throngs thither to hear the gospel. Having been converted, he is encouraged by Paul to return to his master. This he finally does, carrying with him a letter from Paul. The result is, that the slave at the wish of the master comes joyfully back to Rome and devotes himself to the loving service of Paul.

ARRIVAL.

A trireme that had wintered in the isle—
By stress of weather hindered in her way
From Egypt to the shores of Italy—
Refitted now was ready to pursue
Her destined voyage to Puteoli.
The master's thought had been to put to sea
That selfsame day whose beamy morn beheld
The meeting on the hill in Melita;
But the centurion intervened to bid
Delay the sailing yet another day:
His mind was with his prisoners to embark
Himself on that Egyptian ship for Rome;
And, partly out of kindly complaisance
Toward Paul, and partly from a sympathy
Unconscious, or ashamed and unconfessed
Of interest in the tale that Mary told,
He would not let the purposes he knew
Engaged the Christians for that morn be crossed.

The morrow morn full early they put forth
On a smooth sea beneath a smiling sky.

A concourse of the grateful islanders
Flowed to the quay with signals of farewell
And blessing and with honors manifold
Lavished on Paul and for Paul's sake on them
That with him sailed; nor only eager words
Brought they and tears of reverence and of love,
But bounty in unbounded store of all
Things needful to sustain those travellers' cheer.

So, sail and oar, they steered for Syracuse;
There for three days they tarried, and thence north
Warping their way in variance with the wind
Touched Rhegium where another day they bide.
Then, the south blowing, they once more set sail
And the next day attained Puteoli.

Of those who sailed on that good ship for Rome
Were Felix and Drusilla with their train;
And their train was, by one addition, more
Than when the shipwreck cast them on the isle.
This was a slave, a Phrygian runaway,
Out of Colossæ strayed to Melita
But in his wish and purpose aimed for Rome:
He should be safely lost in multitude

Drowned in the depths of that metropolis.
The shifty Syrus, fond of his device,
And not without true kindness in his heart,
Meeting the fugitive had befriended him.
Onesimus — such name the bondman bore —
He wisely warned that, wandering unattached
And destitute (for spent long since was all
He had in starting from his lord purloined),
He advertised himself for what he was,
A vagrant slave, and ran a needless risk.
"Attach thyself," said Syrus, "to the train
Of my lord Felix; I will manage it
He shall receive thee; he delights in pomp
And show as does Drusilla too his spouse,
And they would gladly swell their retinue
With one head more to make them great at Rome.
This gets thee thither whither thou wouldst go;
Once there, thou quittest at thine own good will
Thy dear adoptive master's service — no
Exchanges of farewells betwixt you twain —
And hast thy freedom, safe of course from him,
Lord Felix, who will have no claim on thee,
And well removed from fear of thine own lord."
He added in pathetic humor half:

"Remember Syrus when thou art thine own
And hast perhaps some small peculium gained,
And in turn help who freely now helps thee."
Onesimus, so doing as Syrus planned
His part, was reckoned of lord Felix slave,
And on that vessel sailed with him to Rome.

Now that which Syrus had, on Stephen's behalf
And on Eunicé's, done and dared, the day
That Felix in his lust threatened to them
In his own house in Melita such harm—
This, Stephen in time had come to know; nor ceased
Thenceforth to wish that he might recompense
In some kind to the bondman his good will.
His grateful wish Stephen had signified
To Syrus, which emboldened him in turn
To make the Hebrew youth a confidant
Of his devices for Onesimus.
Thus Stephen with Onesimus had talked;
Not often, for need was that all should be
Transacted as in secret to avoid
Felix's, more, Drusilla's, jealous watch—
Not often but so many times as served

To yield some true impression to the youth
Of what the slave was in his manhood's worth,
And to inflame a generous desire
Of rescue for him to a nobler life.
Stephen spoke of Onesimus to Paul,
And Paul on shipboard came to speech with him.
The runaway's heart was wholly won to Paul;
And ere those parted at Puteoli
Onesimus had gladly promised Stephen
To seek his uncle out, arrived in Rome.
A sequel thence redounded to the slave
Of boundless blessing he had dreamed not of;
Likewise of good to men in every age
Wherever might be found fit soul to be
Ennobled to the touch of noble thought,
In answerable style with nobleness
Conveyed, and purified fine feeling, borne
To perfect heavenly-mindedness yet sweet
And tender with a pulsing human love.

For Felix and Drusilla, disembarked,
No welcome waited and no warm godspeed;
They went their Romeward way in lonely state,
The showiest that in their impoverished plight

They could make shift to invest themselves withal.
But Paul with his companions, good heart's cheer
Met at Puteoli; a brotherhood
Of lovers greeted them and bade them bide
Seven days for rest and for refreshment there:
The kindly Julius suffered this to them
For Paul's sake easily, seeing to Paul he owed
His own life snatched from those shipwrecking
waves.
A week of opportunity it was
To Paul for service of his fellow-men;
For he most rested when he labored most,
Unhindered, with the joy of harvest his,
Winning men to the obedience of his Lord.
Fed with a full refection of such toil
And gladdened with the cordial dearest to him,
Comfort of love from mutual human hearts,
The prisoner apostle, those seven days
Ended, was ready to move on toward Rome.

Dusty and weary footing many a mile
To him and to his fellow-prisoners,
As to those willing sharers of his lot,
Lay stretched before them on the Roman road.

Eastward a stage by the Campanian Way
To Capua — city famous then as since
For lulling in her too luxurious lap
To loss of manhood in enervate sloth
Those warriors who, with the great Hannibal
For leader, late had spurned the barrier Alps,
Thence, like a loosened avalanche, had fallen
On Italy — and might have taken Rome!
A different conqueror now in captive's chains
Was marching on that world-metropolis:
No battle of the warrior would he wage,
With confused noise and garments rolled in blood;
Yet wrested from the Cæsars Rome should be
And from the empire of her gods no gods!

From Capua northwestward breaking sharp,
The Way, now Appian from Campanian, led
Over the stream Vulturnus; then across
Savo to Sinuessa by the sea;
Onward thence, climbing the Falernian hills
Vine-clad, until the Massic, last of these,
Descended on their northward-sliding slope,
Shut off behind the wayfarers their view
Of the bright summit of Vesuvius

(His fiery heart uneasily asleep)
And the blue circlet of the Lucrine Lake.

Like a stream flooded level with its banks,
The Appian Way was filled from side to side
With travel flowing double to and fro.
Now centuries of soldiers, foot or horse,
Clanged iron hoof or heel with rhythmic beat
Along the bedded rock that paved their way;
Now pomps of embassy in various garb,
Returning from their suits at Cæsar's feet
Or thither tending vexed with hope or fear;
Then some gay reveller to Baiæ bound,
Behind his foaming steeds urged ever on,
Dashed in his biga down the crowded road
And recked not what might meet his whirling wheels;
Next, moving slowly in more solemn state —
Outriders either hand and nigh before —
The chariot of some rich patrician rolled
Who sought the spring of southern Italy:
Huge wains there were, that creaked along the way
Laden with beasts from Afric or from Ind,
Lions and tigers, and hyenas dire;

These — destined to dye red, perhaps with blood
Of human ravin, the arena sands
Of mighty amphitheaters, a feast
Of foul and fell delight to avid eyes
Of Roman lords and ladies gathered there
With scum and dross plebeian to behold —
Now winked and glared behind their prison-bars
Or frothed and fretted out their fierce disdain.
Luxurious litters borne of sinewy slaves —
Who softly eased them, bending as they went
With well-timed flexure and compliant gait
Their supple knees in perfect unison —
Were thickly sown between, with ladies fair
Reposing in them sunk in silk and down,
Or senators of Rome effeminate ;
Besides, were foot-wayfarers, motley groups
Or single, messengers that hasted post,
Slaves trusted by their masters to convey
Letters of import out of lands remote
To Rome or out of Rome abroad ; with those,
Idlers and loiterers sauntering without aim,
Vomit from Rome or current thither sucked,
Freemen, but of the dregs of populace
And shameless feeders at the public crib.

Beholding all this various spectacle
Of life lived wholly without God, and vain,
Paul sighed in spirit and thought: 'The world,
the world!
How vast and dreadful, overshadowing all!
How strong and dreadful, dominating all!
Kingdom and usurpation in the earth!
What power shall overthrow thee, so enthroned
As thou art at the center of all things
In Rome, and wielding, thou unshaken there,
Thence wielding all the shaken universe
Implement in thy hand to wreak thy will?
Appalling! Yea, yet am I not appalled.
"Be of good cheer," said Jesus, then when He
Seemed to be sinking vanquished by the world,
Even then, "Be of good cheer," said He, "lo, I
Have overcome the world." O, hollow show
And mockery of power browbeating me!
Browbeaten am I not, though in myself
Nothing, nay, less than nothing, vanity.
There is One in me who is mightier far
Than is that mighty who is in the world.
Not carnal are the weapons of my war;
But potent through my God they yet shall prove

Unto the pulling down of all strong holds,
And false imaginations of the minds
Of men, with every overweening high
Thing that exalts itself against the Lord!

'But, O, the streams of men that blinded go,
One secular procession perishing,
Endlessly on and on, from age to age,
In every race and clime — that blinded go
In sadness or with madcap songs of mirth
Frightfully toward the brink and precipice
Beetling sheer over the abyss profound
Of hopeless utter last despair and death —
For whom Christ died! Shall He have died in vain?
Forbid it God! Was it not promised Him
That he should of the travail of His soul
See and be satisfied? My soul with His
Travails in infinite desire to save;
Give Thou me children in my bonds at Rome!
O God, my God, hear me herein I pray!'

Enlarged in heart with such desire and prayer
And lifted high in hope of what would be,
Paul walked as one with feet above the ground

Unconsciously buoyed up to tread the air.
But God had further cheer in store for him.
At Appii Forum and the Taverns Three,
Two several stations on the Appian Way,
There met him out of Rome two companies
Of brethren who, while he abode those days
Guest at Puteoli, had heard of him
As Romeward faring, and had come thus far
To bring him greeting and good cheer. They vied
With one another, those two companies,
In joyful rivalry of love to see
Which should speed faster farther forth, and come
First with their plight of loyalty to Paul.
Divided thus, their welcome doubled was
In worth and in effect to him who now
Thanked God and took fresh heart. So on to Rome.

The city, from the summit of a hill
Surmounted, of the Alban range, hill hung
With villas and with villages, was seen,
A huge agglomerate of building heaved
Above the level campagna, circuit wide
By the blue Sabine mountains bounded north

With lone Soracte in Etruria shown —
Streets of bright suburbs, gardens, aqueducts
Confused about the walls on every side.
Between long rows of stately sepulchers
Illustrious with memorial names inscribed,
The Scipios, the Metelli, many more —
Each name a magic spell to summon up
The image of the greatness of the Rome
That had been — ranged along the Appian Way,
Slowly they passed, Paul with his train, unmarked.
Through throngs of frequence serried ever dense
And denser with the confluence of the tides
Of travel and of traffic intermixed,
Pedestrian, and equestrian, and what rolled
In chariots, splendid equipage, or mean,
Entering and issuing at the city gate —
Slowly, thus hindered, on they urged their way.

At last they — passing by the Capene port
Under an arch of stone forever dewed
And dripping through its grudging pores with ooze
As of cold sweat wrung out by agony
To bear the great weight of the aqueduct
Above it — were within the Servian Wall.

On their left hand the Aventine, they wound
About the Cœlian by its base; traversed
A droop of hollow to the Palatine;
Over the gentle undulation named
Velia next passing (where, ere many years,
The arch of Titus would erect its pride
To glory over Jerusalem destroyed!);
Hence down the Sacred Way into the famed
Forum, where stood that milestone golden called
Which rayed out roads to all the provinces,
And was as if the navel of the world.

All round them here great architecture rose,
Temples, basilicas, long colonnades,
Triumphal arches, amphitheaters,
Aqueducts vaulting with colossal spring
As if in huge Cyclopean sport across
From pier to pier of massive masonry;
Stupendous spectacle! but over all,
To Paul's eye, one sole legend written large,
Not Rome's majestic history and power,
But her abjectness in idolatry;
Rome's captive pitied her, and would have saved!

Crowning the summit of the Capitoline,

The palace of the Cæsars wide outspread,
A wilderness of building, hung in view.
To Burrus, the prætorian prefect, here
In due course Julius gave his prisoners up;
But ere he deemed himself acquitted quite
Of his debt due to Paul he gained for him
From Burrus, a just man, the privilege
Of living as in free captivity
In quarters of his own, at small remove
From the prætorium yet in privacy.
With Paul abode his sister and her son;
Ruth nigh at hand with her Eunicé lodged—
Protected, for again from these not far
The faithful Luke and Aristarchus dwelt.
A season the disciples of the Lord
In Rome supplied to all their frugal needs;
But each one had some handicraft or skill
Which soon found chance and scope to exercise
Itself to purpose; and with cheerful toil
In thankfulness they earned their daily bread.

Two years long here, as late in Cæsarea,
Paul waited on the wanton whim of power;
A prisoner in chains, accused of crime,

And even the right of trial still denied.
Yet, though both night and day, asleep, awake,
Bound to a ruthless Roman soldier arm
To arm, he, the great heart, the spacious mind,
Was not uncomforted, not void of joy:
He had at full his fellowship of love,
And, better, he could freely preach his Lord.
Besides, whatever soldier guarded him,
That soldier, if his heart was capable
At all of gentleness for any cause
Toward any one, was softened toward this man
Whom he felt ever strangely toward himself
As toward one not so happy in his lot
Considerate, regardful, pitiful;
And whom not seldom, with a sweet constraint
Persuaded or compelled, he listened to
Telling him of a Savior that could save
Even to the uttermost, therefore also him.

As loyal lover of his nation, Paul
Invited to give audience to his cause
First his compatriots judged the chief in Rome.
He told them that, albeit he had appealed
To Cæsar from his fellow-countrymen,

Yet had he naught to accuse his nation of.
Paul's hearers on their part had had, they said,
No word against him from Jerusalem.
They added: "We would hear thee speak thy
mind;
As for this party of the Nazarene,
That everywhere we know is spoken against."
So they appointed Paul a day to speak,
And in full frequence to his lodgings came.
All the day long from morn to evenfall
He held discourse to them, and testified
The kingdom come on earth of God, and Him,
The King, Christ Jesus; with persuasions drawn
From Moses and from all the prophets old.
Divided were his hearers; some elect
Believed, but others disbelieved. To these
Paul solemnly denounced the prophecy
Of sad Isaiah to his countrymen
That seeing they should see and not perceive;
Then added: "Witness now, I make you know
That the salvation sent by God in vain
To you turns to the Gentiles; they will hear."
Thenceforward daily, streams of concourse flowed
Unhindered, bondmen, freemen, to Paul's doors,

And heard while God's ambassador in chains
Besought them to be reconciled to God.

The million slaves of the metropolis
Were as a subterranean city Rome,
Substruction to the mighty capital.
Here undercurrent rumor to and fro
From mouth to mouth or haply in dumb sign
Transmitted — cipher unintelligible
Save to the dwellers of that underworld —
Ran swift and secret as by telegraph
And everywhither messages conveyed.
Onesimus thus learned where Paul abode,
And what a tide set daily toward him there
Of eager audience for the things he taught:
The bondman threw himself upon the tide,
And was borne by it whither he would go.
Hearing good tidings meant for such as he,
Decree of manumission for the slave,
He joyful freeman of the Lord became.
Freeman and bondman both at once was he —
Free from the hateful service of himself,
And bond of love to serve his Savior Lord.

This his new loyalty Paul put to proof

Extreme, proposing to the runaway
Return to his Colossian servitude;
Paul would test also the obedient faith
Of the wronged master of the fugitive.
When Syrus learned this from Onesimus,
He, wary, with a much-importing shrug
Of shoulder, warned his friend betimes beware.
The young disciple by such whispered fears
Was somewhat shaken in his faithful mind;
He failed a moment from his first good will
To do as prompted his new heart and Paul.
But at the last he was persuaded quite;
Yet rather by the spectacle itself
Of that apostle willingly in chains
For Jesus than by any words he spoke:
He fixed to go back to his master. Paul
Gave him a letter for that master, sealed.
Now Paul well knew the master, but of this
He wisely to Onesimus said naught.
Philemon was his name; he had by Paul
Been won to be a brother in the Lord.

"How knowest thou what is in that letter?" so
Syrus, with honest scruple, asked his friend.

"Paul is a good man, aye; but good men need
Money in Rome to serve themselves withal.
He makes a merit of returning thee
Haply and in his letter claims reward
Which thou thyself shalt pay with servitude
Exacted henceforth heavier than before—
Besides the stripes and brands for runaways.
Thou hast thy freedom, keep it, and be wise."

Onesimus was wise, but he went back;
Onesimus was wise; yea, and he kept
His freedom also, double freedom kept,
Of spirit as of flesh, though he went back.
This was the letter which the bondman bore:

'Paul, prisoner of Christ Jesus, and with him
'Timotheus the brother, to our friend
'Belovéd and our fellow-laborer,
'Philemon; and to Appia the sister;
'And to our fellow-soldier of the truth,
'Archippus; and to all the church with thee:
'Grace unto you and peace in plenteous store,
'From God our Father and His Son our Lord!

'I never cease pouring out thanks to God
'For thee, my brother, in my daily prayers;

'I hear such tidings of thy faith and love
'Toward our Lord Jesus and toward all God's
own.
'I pray thy faith may multiply itself
'Richly in others, and of influence prove
'To spread the knowledge everywhere abroad
'Of all the good in us to work for Christ.
'Joy have I and sweet comfort in thy love,
'Because God's people oft have been in heart
'Cheered by thee, brother. So, albeit I might
'Boldly in the authority of Christ
'Enjoin upon thee what is seemly, yet
'For love's sake I beseech thee rather, I,
'Being such as Paul the aged, prisoner now
'Of Jesus Christ — beseech thee for my son
'Whom I have late begotten in my bonds,
'Onesimus; unprofitable once
'To thee but now to thee and me alike
'Found profitable. I have sent him back —
'Him have sent back, that is, mine own heart
sent;
'I fain myself had kept him with me here
'To minister to me in thy stead, while I
'For preaching the glad tidings wear these bonds;

'But I would nothing do without thy mind
'In order that thy kindness may not be
'As of compulsion but of free good will.
'Who knows but in God's grace and wisdom he
'Was parted from thee for a little time
'That thou mightst have him for thine own forever,
'As slave no longer, but above a slave,
'Brother belovéd now, greatly to me,
'But how much more to thee, both in the flesh
'And in the Lord! If then a partner's place
'I hold in thy regard, receive thou him
'Even as myself. If he have wronged thee aught,
'Or anywise have fallen in debt to thee,
'Put that to mine account.'

Until these words,
Paul had let Stephen catch with ear alert
What issued hastening from his fervid lips,
And fix it on the parchment with swift hand.
But now himself he seized the pen and wrote
As so to make his promise fast and good.
'Put that to mine account,' he wrote; 'I, Paul,
'Write this with mine own hand; I will repay

'Thee; for I would not say to thee that thou
'Owest to me thy very self besides.
'Yea, brother'—now by Stephen's hand once more—
'Let me have joy of thee in Christ the Lord;
'Comfort thou me in Him. I write to thee
'In fullest faith of thine obedient heed;
'Thou wilt go even beyond my word I know.
'Moreover I have hope to be thy guest
'Erelong; make ready for me; through the prayers
'Of you belovéd all, I trust to come.

'Epaphras, fellow-prisoner of mine
'In Jesus Christ, sends greeting to thee; Mark
'Likewise, and Aristarchus, Demas, Luke,
'My fellow-laborers, wish thee health and peace.
'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ abide
'A guestship with your spirit evermore!'

The generous trust Paul staked upon him found
Philemon worthy, or him worthy made.
At first he frowned on his returning slave,
Who shrank before him, conscious of his fault.
But in the truth and secret of their hearts,

Master and bondman toward each other yearned.
Either remembered what before had been,
The wont of mutual human-heartedness
Which, between such as they, could not but spring
To blossom in kind offices exchanged
To make the bond of master and of slave
Unnatural though it was yet tolerable.
Philemon, less in anger and despite
Than in love disappointed and aggrieved,
Was ready to burst out upon the youth
In loud upbraidings of his gracelessness
To have made his master such return for all
The kindness he had tasted in his house;
Whereto Onesimus would have replied
With protestations of his penitence
And tears of promise never to offend
Again a master so magnanimous;
But when Philemon broke the letter's seal
And read what Paul had written, his eyes swam
And his heart melted and he flung his arms
Wide to embrace his slave and welcome him
With kisses of a brother to his breast;
And they twain wept together happy tears
Of equal love and heavenly gratitude,

And fell upon their knees before the Lord
And poured out all their soul in fervent prayer
For Paul through whom their blessing came to them.

Soon after, from Philemon charged with gifts
To Paul and many messages of love,
Onesimus went joyful back to Rome
To serve his master there by serving Paul.
He faithfully rehearsed to Syrus all
That at Colossæ chanced to him, and said:
"Paul never told me that he knew my lord,
That therefore I might trust him all in all.
He must have wished to put me so to proof
What naked peril I would dare for Christ.
I tremble when I think: 'If I had failed
In faith and in obedience to Paul's word!
Had I not made the venture to go back!
What had I lost on earth, perhaps in heaven!'
But I am glad the venture was so sheer,
Since I at last went back in spite of doubt.
But, know, my heart beat thick against my ribs,
When I was on the brink to meet him first,
My master — for in truth I had wrought him wrong.
But, Syrus, what thinkest thou my master did?

Thou hast never, I suppose, beheld a slave
Wept over by his master as in love,
And like an equal drawn unto his breast
And kissed. But so my master did to me.
For he too was disciple, like myself,
And Paul erst won him to discipleship;
And thus we twain were brethren in the Lord.
And *he* was tried and found not wanting too!
And here am I in Rome, no runaway,
But hither by Philemon's wishes sped
To be a happy minister to Paul."

When Syrus heard such things, the skeptic heart
That had resisted all Paul's eloquence
Was overcome at last through works to faith.

BOOK XXII.

DRUSILLA AND NERO.

While Paul in chains is writing to Christian churches letters characterized at once by the sublimest reaches of spiritual vision and by the most painstaking condescension to details of practical precept, Simon the sorcerer, with Felix and Drusilla, plots the apostle's death. Simon proceeds by indirection, having it in mind to bring about the death of Felix also. This he accomplishes, with the collusion and complicity of Drusilla. But first, at Drusilla's instance, he procures for her in company with her husband an audience with Nero, of which Poppæa, the emperor's favorite, is secretly an observer. Poppæa notices the impression made on her sovereign by Drusilla, and she is openly present at a subsequent hearing granted by Nero to the beautiful Jewess, during which the latter accuses Paul, together with other crimes, of instigating the murder by poison of Felix. Nero throughout displays, with much license, his reckless and frivolous character.

DRUSILLA AND NERO.

That Phrygian slave did not companionless
His way Colossæ-ward pursue; he went
By Tychicus accompanied, who bore
Another letter written from the lips
Of Paul to the Colossian church at large.
This gloried and exulted in sublime
Prophetic visions of far future things—
Things future far and other quite than these.
Paul's hand was manacled, but not his soul;
That, given the freedom of the universe,
Ranged as at will on wing omnipotent
Through all the heights and depths of space and time,
And saw unutterable things, which he
Seeking to lade upon expression made
The very pillars of expression bend
And sway and totter, like to sink, beneath
The burden insupportable they bore.

Great soul and free, free in a body bound,
So soaring those empyreal altitudes

Winged with his native vigor but upborne
On a strong-breasted gale of power divine
Inspiring and enabling him, who took
Undazzled, like an eagle in full gaze
Upon the sun, insufferably bright
Glimpses of heavenly glory, he yet deigned —
Nay, he ascended but to condescend
The mightier by his lofty lowliness,
From exaltation such beheld come down! —
Deigned to the level of the mean degree
Of men that needed to be counselled thus:
"Lie not one to another, seeing ye
"Have put off the old man that late ye were,
"Him with his deeds, and the new man put on,
"The man made new through knowledge to become
"Once more the image, long so far defaced,
"Of that God who at first created him.
"Put ye on, therefore, as elect of God
"To be His holy and belovéd, all
"Sweet meltingness of heart, kindness and love,
"A lowly mind most meek, long-suffering,
"Forbearing one another, and should ever,
"But that be far! some man among you have

"Complaint or quarrel against any, then,
"As Christ forgave you once, forgive so ye;
"And over all these vestments of the soul,
"Completing them and binding them secure,
"Put ye on love, girdle of perfectness.
"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

"Ye wives, to your own husbands subject be,
"So yielding as befits you in the Lord.
"Ye husbands, love your wives and nourish not
"Against them any bitterness of heart.
"Children, obey your parents in all things,
"For this well-pleasing is unto the Lord.
"Fathers, good heed give ye not to provoke
"Your children unto wrath, lest they lose heart.
"Servants, your masters in the flesh obey,
"Not with eye-service as men-pleasers, this,
"But single-heartedly as fearing God.
"And whatsoever be the thing ye do,
"Heartily do it, as if doing all
"For the Lord Christ in heaven and not for men;
"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive
"Guerdon of that inheritance reserved
"For your true bond of service is to Christ.

"But he that doeth wrong shall for that wrong
"Due recompense receive; and with the Lord
"Is no respect of person or degree.
"Ye masters, to your servants what is just
"And equal render; for a Master ye,
"Ye also, have who watcheth from the heaven."

While Paul with tongue or pen such things
discoursed,
Things heavenly and things earthly intermixed
(Yet so as earthly things to raise to heaven,
Like the sea lifted skyward by the moon),
Simon the sorcerer, with the guilty pair,
His master and his mistress, otherwise
Was busy, plotting the apostle's death.
Plot within plot there was; the sorcerer sought
The death of Felix too, for hate of him.
To compass this, he fed Drusilla's mind
With bitter poison and with poison sweet;
The bitter, of innuendo to inflame
Her jealous rancor more against her spouse;
The sweet, of flattery ever interfused
In casual hint dropped, whisper by the way,
No recognition sought, still less reply,

Rebuke, repudiation, tempted not,
But inly working to inebriate
Her pride of beauty and her sense of power,
Till she should dare whatever need be dared
Of danger or of crime to clear her way
To empire hoped over the emperor.

At length the double venom took effect
Such on Drusilla's fierce aspiring mind,
That Simon ventured on these words to her:
"Ill sleeper is thine husband, O my liege!
I overhear him oft in troubled dream
Belching forth broken voices of unrest.
He sleeps like Ætna or Vesuvius,
Say like Enceladus with Ætna piled—
Thou knowest their fable of that giant old.
I hope he never will by evil chance
Work his wife harm unmeant in his nightmares!
Such weight, such strength, are monstrous in such
throes!"

Drusilla was as deep as Simon; she
Well enough guessed whither he tended so.
She made her face an utter vacancy,
And listened all as if she listened not,

While Simon, who was satisfied, went on
With his approaches neither shunned nor met:
"At least, madam, thine own rest needs must be
Disturbed: it would be easy to compose
Thine husband to a sounder sleep." He paused,
And she made answer quite as from the point,
But Simon did not miss the relevance:
"Simon, my lord is still postponed at court,
Has had no hearing of the emperor:
Reason enough that he should restless be.
Procure he have his audience soon, and then —
Simon, what thinkest thou? Would it not be well
That I attend him when he pleads his cause?
Thou knowest I have some gift of eloquence,
The woman's, and thy master is but man,
And somewhat slow of speech — if thick of wit
Too, that becomes me not to say to thee.
I feel that I might help our common cause
By being in presence with the emperor
Myself, as loyal sponsor for my spouse."
"Excellent," Simon said; "and no doubt I,
Permitted to make proffer such as this
From queen Drusilla, shall with ease contrive
An early audience with his majesty."

The conscious twain each other understood,
But neither token gave with lip or eye.

Simon bethought him of the beautiful
Wanton, Poppæa, with the emperor
Precariously omnipotent by her charm.
To her, in manner suiting such as he,
He wormed at length his way and fawning said:
"I have some little skill in certain arts
Called by the people magic, and I fain
Thus offer thee my services. I thought
I might amuse a tedious idle hour
For his imperial majesty and so
Perhaps, I know not how, but thou shouldst choose,
Serve thee, the wonder of the woman world.
Nay, this presumes amiss; I crave thy grace,
Forgive me, thou who art already queen
And empress of the earth, and canst not need
Service from any. I am all confused
Before thee, like one dazzled by the sun.

"It is my foolish vanity, I feel,
Nothing but that; but here am I in Rome,
And it would be the triumph of my life —
Just a Judæan magian as I am —

To have seen the emperor, and diverted him
With a few rather pretty tricks I know.
I on occasion have even awed a mind
Open to superstition (as most minds
Are sometimes, aye, the wisest among men,
Let witness the great Julius) with my art.
If ever the fair sovereign of his breast
Should in aught wish him more amenable,
Thou mayst trust me, and I should not despair
To move his mind as thou mightst signify."

Not quite at venture Simon drew his bow
Thus, for from common fame he knew how keen
That very moment was Poppæa's wish,
As yet denied to her imperious suit,
To supersede Octavia in her right
And be the consort of the emperor.
The wily sorcerer warped his sinuous way:
"Here I have seemed to sue thee for myself;
But, sooth to say, I plead another's cause.
Wilt thou not see Drusilla? Jewess, who,
Declined from royal fortune and degree,
Now seeks a hearing from the emperor
For her lord Felix, late in Palestine

A ruler, but unhappily since fallen
Under some cloud of doubt at Rome. Beseech
Thee, give my liege Drusilla speech with thee.
She too is fair, if not as thou, yet fair.
She fain, I think, would meet the emperor
In person, that her tears might touch his heart."

Subtle insinuation was conveyed
By Simon saying this, which the quick sense
Of the imperial favorite caught; she said:
"It does not need thy lady fair should first
Wait upon me; without that, she shall have
Her wished access and opportunity.
When her lord Felix presently is called
To hearing, let Drusilla with him come.
Her privilege she will find before prepared;
So much I freely undertake for her."

Poppæa had her reasons and her scheme;
And, as for Simon, he said to himself:
"Whichever woman prosper, I am sped."

Drusilla girded up both mind and will
To meet her one imperial chance aright.

Felix went like a culprit; like a queen
Went she, her peerless beauty wielded all
With absolute command infallible—
Like a bright weapon edged and tempered true
Seen wielded in the perfect swordsman's hand.
Slack heed the youthful emperor paid him
Still struggling to support his truculence;
His gaze fixed undisguisedly on her.
Poppæa from behind a screen set nigh
Saw and heard all; not unsuspected quite
Of the alert Drusilla wise as she
In arts of ambush for waylaying words
Or looks meant to be private: Nero knew
Poppæa was there.

Drusilla triumphing
Joyed in her heart to have her rival see
How easy usurpation was when one
Appeared whose very birthright was to reign:
Nero was willing those eavesdropping ears
And eyes should witness what would madden them;
He took a wanton mischievous delight
In teasing that fierce heart to jealousy.
This, too much drunken with her glorying,

Drusilla did not guess, and overweened
In measure of the conquest she had won.
The emperor made the hearing short; dismissed
Felix dismayed and from his truculence
Completely broken — to his servile state
Remanded, as in spirit so in mien.
Yet did not Nero so his cause conclude:
He said frankly to Felix: "Go, my lord,
Thy way; I shall not need to see thee more.
Let thou this lady at next summons come
Without thee; she shall better plead thy cause."

Sentence of death the emperor had pronounced,
Not meaning it, upon that wretched man.
Felix resumed his truculence, alone
Returning with Drusilla; he had felt —
Insensate as he was, could not but feel —
Her separation of herself from him
In the imperial presence, and he now
Fiercely upbraided her. But she was soft
Replying; with indignant tenderness
Purged herself clear of all but loving guile
Practiced reluctantly in his behoof —
His, sole, her husband, father to her son! —

To serve him with the amorous emperor.
Felix could not resist the witching wiles
Of fondness and of faithfulness she plied,
And he became a plaything in her hands
Trusting alike her loyalty and wit.

She presently told Simon: "Full come now
The time is that thy master should enjoy
Sleep undisturbed with dreams. Compound for me
The quieting potion that thou toldst me of.
See that thou make it strong enough; thy lord
Is not a puny weakling to be soothed
With what might still a crying babe; and I —
Nay, thou, thou thyself, Simon, shalt commend
His opiate to his lips." The sorcerer shrugged
His shoulders and demurred: "O liege, nor thou,
Nor I, with our own hands, should to his lips
Present the potion. Let a trusted slave
Bear it unto his master's bath to-night,
And say: 'His queen unto lord Felix sends
Health and the promise of more quiet sleep.'
The draught is drastic — for a lullaby —
Indeed disturbing in its first effect;
But safe sleep it will bring whoever drinks."

"Thy sedative will not pain my lord too much?"
Drusilla made her tone expressionless
In asking; and in like wise Simon said:
"Not too much, lady — let me be the judge,
Or thee who lovest him equally with me."

Drusilla summoned Syrus, and said to him:
"Thou lovest thy master and thy mistress well —
Better, I think, of late than once thou didst."
"My master and my mistress both I love
So as, I trust, to serve them faithfully,"
The slave, a little hard bestead, replied.
"Aye, I have noted thy true love for us;
Be sure, lad, thou shalt nothing lose thereby,"
Drusilla wheedlingly resumed; whereat
Syrus could not refrain himself from saying
In so much spurning of the sense implied:
"Yea, noble lady, none can ever lose
Aught by obeying Christ the Lord in heaven."
"What meanest thou, boy?" Drusilla sharply said.
"Lord other than lord Felix hast thou then?"

Syrus was sorry he had gone so far;
Yet loyalty to Jesus and to Paul

Wrought in him, and, supported as it was
With instinct of unquenchable revolt
From Felix and Drusilla both alike,
Buoyed him and kept him firm in that assay.
"Yea, madam," he replied, "I have a lord,
Christ Jesus, crucified once, but alive
Now and ascended far above all height
By the right hand of God in heaven set down."
'That is of Paul, that surely is of Paul!'
Drusilla reasoned; then, with threatening brow,
To Syrus: "Whence these things to thee? The truth —
Thou hast heard Paul, and learned such lies from him?"
"I have heard Paul, yea, madam, and have learned
From him such truth as makes me true to thee
Beyond what ever I had been before."
"Aye, aye, no doubt," Drusilla, musing, sneered.
A light broke in upon her mind; she said:
"That precious runaway, Onesimus,
He, I suppose, heard Paul, and got himself
Puffed up with these same notions of a lord
In heaven, which set him feeling free of us.
Tell me, what knowest thou of Onesimus?

Did he hear Paul? Where is he now? Tell me,
Thou rogue, for verily I believe thou knowest."

Shrewd as he was, Syrus conceived a hope,
A sudden simple hope that if the truth,
The beautiful mere truth, were told her now,
Drusilla, yea, Drusilla even, would feel
Its power. So he rehearsed the history,
How that Onesimus, induced by Paul,
Had gone back to his master at Colossæ;
How that his master, for the love of Paul
Who had erst won him to the love of Jesus,
Had bidden Onesimus return to Rome
There in his stead to minister to Paul;
How that Onesimus had gladly come,
And was that moment gratefully with Paul.
Drusilla listened, but she gave no sign;
She had in truth been listening absently,
Absorbedly considering what fresh proof
To purpose against Paul perhaps was here.
She said to Syrus: "Aye, a pretty tale
To entertain thy mistress' ear withal!
Why never can you people tell the truth?
You always seem to think you must contrive

Some falsehood, though the truth would better
serve.
Well, well, it is your way. But now, my lad,
Be ready, when thy master to his bath
Shall presently repair, bring me prompt word.
An errand I shall have for thee to him
That as thou lovest him thou wilt love to do."

Syrus, as bidden duly coming, heard:
"Take this, my lad, let not a drop be spilled,
And bearing it to thy master say to him,
'Thy lady sends a sleeping-draught to thee,
And with it wishes health and placid sleep.'"
Syrus, deep scrupling, 'Fair is this, or foul?'
Yet found no way not to fulfill the word.
Felix said: "This is strange. What sayest thou,
boy?
Thy mistress sends me this? Thou liest, thou
wretch!
This is thine own work; thou wouldst do me
dead;
Drink it thyself, thou varlet, and go sleep.
Thou wilt not? Nay, but yea thou wilt, thou shalt;
Now, let me see thee drink it every drop."

And with his trembling hand the debauchee
Gave Syrus back the chalice.

"Let me call
My mistress; thou shalt hear from her own lips
Whether she did not send this draught to thee,
Charging me not to waste one precious drop.
I know I should offend by drinking it.
But thou mightst take it somewhat heedfully,
Trying it drop by drop at first to prove
Its virtue and its fitness to thy case."
So Syrus pleaded; and his master said:
"That is not spoken like a poisoner.
But so thou darest, rascal, cast a doubt
On what thy mistress sends in love to me?
Thou shalt pay dear for that; for I shall tell
Her thou presumedst to advise to me
A care, forsooth, how I partook her cheer.
Here, give it me, and I will toss it off—
One swallow—there!—and lay me down to sleep."

Drusilla, soon thereafter called again
To audience with the emperor, high in hope
Went radiant with her beauty; but was vexed
To find Poppæa seated by his side

As if assessor of his judgment-throne.
She sat resplendent in her robes of state,
As queenly in her person and her port;
Yet of a soft delicious loveliness
That took Drusilla captive by its charm.
Aspiring as she did to rival her
Drusilla thought involuntary thoughts
Of admiration mixed with jealousy:
'No wonder that she sits there throned by him,
Imperial lovely creature that she is!
That bloom of youth and beauty on her cheek!
The tempting undulation of repose
Suggested underneath the graceful folds
Of vesture that flow down the supple limbs
And softening into curves of lusciousness
The statuesque perfection of her form!
But pampered with what pains of luxury!
They say five hundred asses follow her
Wherever she makes progresses abroad
And spend their milk to brim a bath for her,
That her sweet flesh and delicate lose not
That melting softness and that lucency!'
'The wanton!'—so she virtuously thought.

Poppæa was all graciousness; she bade
Drusilla trust her friendship utterly.
She had had herself her sorrow; whereat tears
Orbed large her lucid eyes and fairer made.
She quoted Dido out of Virgil, saying,
"'Myself not inexperienced in distress,
I learn to succor who are miserable.'
My Otho — but that wound is yet too fresh!
Why had lord Felix died so suddenly?
He had no need to die so — if he took
His own life rashly in despair; his cause
Was far from lost — in fact, was safe enough —"
"His brother Pallas," Nero interposed,
"Had seen to that; but there were reasons of state
Why his acquittal should not yet transpire."
"Indeed I comforted my spouse with hope
All that I could," Drusilla wiped a tear
Responding, "and it was not suicide,
I think now, but a prompted murder base."
"Murder is rampant everywhere in Rome,"
The Rhadamanthine Nero sadly said;
"But we think little of it till it stalks
Into the sacred circle of our own
And strikes down husband, mother, ruthlessly!"

Poppæa and the emperor joined hands
In tacit token of sweet sympathy.

'Such acting! Can I hope to equal it?'
Drusilla, not a little dashed in spirit,
Said to herself; 'yet let me not despair.'
"Madam, thy husband's death must be avenged,"
So Nero, with imperial complaisance
But in a manner to dismiss the theme.
Accepting the dismissal meant, and yet
Attaching to her dutiful reply
A hint to tempt him on, Drusilla said:
"I thank thy majesty for saying that;
And the same stroke will many crimes avenge."

Had she achieved her wish? She could not guess.
Nero, as if with shift of aim, inquired:
"Thou art late arrived in Rome from Palestine;
What dost thou chance to know of this man Paul,
Prisoner here, like thyself Jew in blood?"
"I thank thee too that thou hast asked me that,"
Drusilla with judicial candor said;
"Aye, Paul is of one kindred with myself,
I blush to say it; he is a renegade,

Offscouring, outcast of his countrymen.
I pray thee judge thou not our race from him."
"But our sage Seneca, my schoolmaster,"
Smiled Nero with imperial pleasantry,
"Speaks otherwise of Paul. I bade him go
Visit the Jew philosopher in chains
And sound him of the depth of wisdom his.
He brought me back a wonderful report;
'A little transcendental,' so he said,
'Too much of Oriental mysticism,
But sane at bottom, and a man of worth.'
Tell us about Paul. I should be much pleased
To put to blush my old oracular
Smug Seneca with proof that he for once
At least mistook; a fine old gentleman
Is Seneca, but too infallible;
In fact, intolerably infallible.
I cannot stand infallibility —
Except my own and thine of course, my dear
Poppæa! When they come to deify
Us, we shall have to be infallible.
That is, supposably: I will inquire
Of Seneca; he is my arbiter,
Know, madam, in these minor points, as is

My superfine good friend Petronius
In those more serious points of etiquette."

Drusilla masked amazement, listening keen
While this young portent of an emperor
Let play his humor of hilarity.
Eccentric and incalculable curves
Of orbit, pure caprices of career,
Might seem to be the movement of his speech;
But always, from whatever apogee,
It failed not its return to bitterness:
The playful tiger gnashed his ravin fangs.
Still turning toward Drusilla, he went on:
"Behooves, lady, thine emperor of the world
Should be well schooled in all things; I abound
In tutors at my elbows to nudge me;
Old Burrus there, I have not mentioned him —
No disrespect intended — what thinkest thou?
Schoolmasters and schoolmistresses and all,
Is there not risk they overstep the bound?
So few know where, just where, the limit is.
My own dear mother — to her ashes peace! —
Sacred as was her right, if she had lived
Might yet have come to manage overmuch."

Poppæa even, in her victorious calm
Of conscious power beside him, winced at this
As at slant notice served upon herself;
And poor Drusilla hugged a shudder down.
But Nero rattled on licentiously:
"What was I saying? Aye, 'infallible'" —
And toward Poppæa now his eye he turned —
"We two shall have to be infallible —
I take it so — when they make gods of us.
What a bore that, to be infallible!
Bore to be anything because one must!
Let us take it as a joke and not be bored —
Uproarious joke, my dear, for me and thee
To pose as gods, while we hold both our sides
Lest we split laughing and upset mankind!

"But for the present here is help arrived,
Welcome, while we stay only mortals yet,
To make that old prig of a Seneca
Come down once from his magisterial throne."
Wherewith he to Drusilla spoke once more:
"Madam, we listen, tell us about Paul."

Besides that menace slanted in his words,
The gamesome emperor hurt Drusilla sore

Demonstrating before her thus a firm
Accord and understanding knit between
Himself and this Poppæa; worse to bear,
Poppæa's easy air of affable —
A condescension equal to his own
Toward her, Drusilla, air as of a queen
Deigning her scepter toward a suppliant!
Drusilla would have felt it like a touch
Of tonic to her blood, could she have found
One least hint that Poppæa in her heart
Hated her: but Poppæa far too well
Was mistress of her part; she sweetly smiled
Exquisite discomposure on her foe.

With sheer exertion of her will, or helped
Only with the delight to injure Paul —
Daunted, yet with a front of dauntlessness —
Drusilla entered on her perjury.
By the reaction of her eloquence
Upon herself reflected from the fixed
Admiring heed she won, she plucked up heart
Of buoyance to be brilliant more and more
As she went on and told the emperor,
Him chiefly, and at length not her at all,

How Paul was a disturber everywhere;
He at Jerusalem had raised a mob
And tumult of his outraged countrymen
Against himself; they, out of loyalty,
Would then and there have rent him limb from limb,
But that the chiliarch intervened to save
The wretch from violence — not of the law,
Though well deserved — and under escort thence
Sent him to her lord Felix, governor
At Cæsarea, to be held and judged.
Felix, who was the heart of lenity,
Not bearing to condemn him for his crimes,
Postponed his trial, until Festus came
Successor to her husband dispossessed
Of kingdom for his too much clemency —
Fault, yet a noble fault, and Cæsar-like
('My Otho!' thy word, madam; 'my Felix!' mine) —
Then Festus on the point to sentence him
Was thwarted by the culprit's hardihood;
Desperate hardihood seeking reprieve
At least from doom by refuge in appeal
To Cæsar.

"Aye, a Roman citizen
Paul has devised some scheme of fraud to be—
Gross profanation of a sacred right
Perverted to asylum thus from crime!
Paul is a master mind—no need to swear
Falsely that he is not; wise Seneca
Was not so much to blame for being deceived
In him, so upright-seeming, plausible.
Their best man, sagest, subtlest of them all,
The Jewish councillors picked out to send
Hither with Paul to make his sentence sure.
Alas, the culprit was too deep for him.
One night on shipboard in the voyage hither
He sought to bribe the soldier guarding him
To make away with this Jew Shimei
By tossing him in darkness overboard.
That plot did not succeed; but Paul contrived
To hoodwink the centurion and make him
Believe the scheme to murder was not his,
Paul's, against Shimei, but Shimei's against Paul!
So Shimei was thrown into chains, while Paul
Stalked the deck free, though for form's sake still
watched.
This lasted, till the very gods in heaven

Had pity on poor Shimei and with stroke
Of lightning set him free from men by death."

"So, is a stroke of lightning pity then,
Sometimes," said Nero, "with the gods in heaven?
A piquant way to pity! We, my dear"—
The emperor with a frolic feline look
That made Poppæa shiver turned to her—
"When we are gods on earth, may imitate
Those our facetious cousins in the skies
With many a stroke of lightning launched in pity!"

An almost boyish blithesomeness lit up
The handsome face of Nero saying this;
Had it not been for frightful lightning strokes
Too frequent sent in deadly earnest down
From that Olympus of imperial power,
All might have seemed but pranksome playfulness.
Drusilla—with profound obeisance bowed—
After due deferent pause if it should please
His majesty to be facetious farther,
Her weaving at her loom of lies resumed:
"Thou wouldst in vain, O emperor, inquire
Of that centurion Julius for the truth;
He himself fell a helpless prey to Paul.

Why, on the wretched island where our ship
Was stranded, lost, and where all winter we
Were cooped up waiting for reluctant spring,
Day after day did that oblivious man
Attend upon his prisoner and a crew,
That prisoner's dupes about him clustering ever,
To hear long tales which seemed to cast a spell
On whoso heard them and bewitch his sense.
I grieve to say a Roman knight was found
There, Sergius Paulus, to lend countenance—
A name proconsular so much defiled!
Yea, and the Roman governor of the isle,
Publius, fell openly into Paul's snare.

"No very serious matter it might seem,
So far, but hearken what a sequel came.
A worthy member of our court abroad,
Who loyally our fortune followed still,
And follows—O Sire, in this degenerate age,
Happy if ancient loyalty survives!—
Simon, a man of merit and device,
Saw when, one morning on an open hill
Withdrawn, Paul made a demonstration dire
Before all these assembled to behold

Whom I have named, what he could do, and would,
With practice of his wicked magic arts.
He smote a woman of his company
Who had offended him dead at a stroke
Of incantation that his lips let fall.
Simon will tell thee, that thou hear first-hand.

"But to crown all" — and here Drusilla's voice
Faltered, and her eyes, eloquent before
With fine indignant passion, now with tears
Dimmed, pathos tenfold eloquent took on —
"Aye, to crown all, no doubt my Felix fell
A victim to his ingrate wickedness.
Our slave-boy Syrus bore his lord a drink
Pretended as of virtue to bring sleep —
Which my poor Felix long had needed sore! —
It brought sleep, but the sleep it brought was death.
Alas, my Felix! And, last infamy,
That slave lad had been primed by Paul to lay
Her consort's murder at his spouse's door!
The frontless varlet had the face to tell
His mistress to her very teeth that she
Had herself sent that sleeping-draught by him
To Felix as he took his evening bath.

It was Paul's sorcery made the boy believe,
Against his own right senses, what was false.
I should have told thee how in lesser sort,
That is, in matter of estate — light thing
Indeed in contrast of such harm to life —
We had before this suffered from Paul's hands;
For he beguiled away a slave of ours —
By name Onesimus, a Phrygian lad —
Through whom perverted first himself from faith
This other servant Syrus was seduced.
No end to that wretch Paul's devices evil!
Let him go free, nay, let him only live,
Though in a prison, the emperor has a foe
Cannot indeed unfix him from his throne —
Where he sits firm as on Olympus Jove
(If thus a faithful Jew may fit her speech) —
But will the quick seeds of sedition sow
To fill the empire with their harvest wild.
Paul teaches all men of another king
Than Cæsar whose sole right it is to reign."

While thus Drusilla at the emperor's ear
Artfully wove false witness against Paul,
Paul in his chains was beating out his heart

In throbbing letters of such strain as this:

'If any consolation, then, in Christ
'There be, if any comfort sweet of love,
'If in the Spirit any fellowship,
'If any moving of compassion even,
'Make my joy full, belovéd, that ye be
'Like-minded each with other, the same love
'Within you all, one spirit, one accord;
'Far be contention, and vainglory far,
'But all in lowly-mindedness esteem
'Each one his fellow better than himself.
'Look not each man toward his own things alone,
'But each man also toward the other's look.
'This mind be in you which in Jesus was:
'He, in His right, was of the form of God,
'Yet thought not his equality with God
'A thing to be held fast to as His spoil;
'But freely made himself of no repute,
'Taking upon Him the bond-servant's form
'And entering the similitude of men.
'Nor yet was this enough; He, being found
'In fashion as a man, humbled Himself
'Still farther and became obedient,
'To the degree of dying — not a death

'Such as befalls the common lot of men,
'But that most dreadful death upon the cross.
'This is the reason why the righteous God
'Exalted Him so highly and the name
'Gave Him that over every name prevails,
'That in the name of Jesus every knee
'Should bow, of beings in heaven, of beings on earth,
'Of beings under earth, and every tongue
'Confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of all
'Unto the glory of the Father God.

'So, my belovéd, as ye have obeyed
'Me ever, not as in my presence only
'But in my absence now much more, work out
'Your own salvation with much wholesome fear,
'Awed in the thought that God Himself it is
'That in you works alike to will and work
'As seemeth in His holy pleasure good.
'No murmurings and no questionings allow,
'That ye may blameless be and void of guile,
'Children of God, open to no rebuke,
'Among a crooked people and perverse,
'Full in the midst of whom ye shine as lights

'Set in the darkness of a world of sin;
'Steadfastly holding forth the word of life,
'That in the day of Christ I may rejoice
'As having not in vain run this my race,
'And not in vain accomplished all my toil.
'But, let it even be mine to be poured out,
'As on an altar set for sacrifice,
'A victim for the service of your faith,
'Know I rejoice and with you all rejoice;
'And for the selfsame cause rejoice all ye,
'Yea, and in fellowship with me rejoice.'

From prison this, in face of martyrdom!
Whatever fell, Paul's victory was secure.
Such love, such faith, such hope, such power in Christ
Of joy, such hold on heaven, was to defeat
Present or future, harm or threat of harm—
From earth, from hell, aimed—inaccessible,
Safe as a star smiling above a storm.

So then Paul wrote, and such himself he was,
While those vain wicked wished to work him ill.

Though the twain listened with all courteous heed

To what Drusilla told and acted then,
Nor Nero nor Poppæa was deceived;
But both admired, and this Drusilla felt.
Having retrieved thus in some part her loss,
She heard demurely while the emperor said:
"Thou understandest, madam, this is not
A formal sitting of our court august.
I oft advise myself beforehand thus —
Though seldom, lady, so agreeably —
What the real merits of an issue are.
I have much enjoyed thy story — and thyself —
And I shall hope to see thee yet again.
Meantime, I pray thee, send thy Simon to me;
I might find use for such a man as he."

Poppæa, to play out her part of queen,
Added a gracious word: "And come thyself
To see me — by the emperor's leave assumed —
And teach me to be Jewess, such as thou.
It must be lovely beyond anything
To hate so and abide so beautiful!"

She had mixed a cunning bitter with her sweet;
Perhaps her Nero so would be forewarned!

BOOK XXIII.

NERO AND SIMON.

Simon, sent by Drusilla to the emperor, finds it impossible to reach the imperial presence without help from Poppæa, who grants him her favor only on condition that he will serve her wish at need. The crafty sorcerer buys his way with the necessary promises. Nero flouts Simon with disdainful irony and sarcasm, which excites the sorcerer's resentment. This feeling he dissembles, while he counsels the unfaithful imperial husband how to rid himself of his young empress Octavia — the sorcerer being all the time in doubt whether it is with Drusilla or with Poppæa that the emperor, who speaks darkly, would supplant her.

Nero at length dismisses Simon, bidding him tell his mistress the emperor's desire to pay her a secret visit. This message the sorcerer gratifies his own spleen by conveying to Drusilla in terms the most offensive to her pride. She bursts out in violent anger and spurning; but Simon shows his mistress how she may salve in a measure the hurt to her dignity, and at the same time serve her hatred of Paul, by making it a condition of her complaisance that the emperor shall first put the apostle and his companions to death. The sorcerer returns with her reply to Nero, who again, and even more deeply than before, stirs the Jew's heart to deadly hatred. Simon plots a wild scheme to have his revenge. Meantime with change in certain officers of the government the aspect of affairs grows threatening for Paul and his fellow-Christians. Onesimus and Syrus are arrested and hurried away to suffer on the rack.

NERO AND SIMON.

Drusilla, eager in uncertain hope
To meet the pleasure of the emperor,
Promptly sent Simon to him as he said.
She charged her minion to bend all his craft
To win his mistress way that she in proof
Upon that youngster emperor of the world
Might, without let from other present, try
If for once only what of power was left
Her, after such misfortunes suffered late,
To steal possession of the hearts of men.
"Consider, Simon, what might not I do
For thee, once seated in that place of power?"
She with such words and with a subtle smile
Of deep insinuation cheered him forth.

But Simon, in an outer anteroom
Of the imperial palace with its guards—
Many removes from where the emperor was—
Long hung in waiting day by day in vain.
At length Poppæa, not the emperor,
Sent gracious word that she would see that Jew.

"Thou hadst perhaps forgotten who it was,"
The favorite, drunken-fond of power nor less
Of demonstration too of power, began,
To dash the sorcerer in his confidence—
"Say, hadst thou not forgotten who it was
Gave thee for thy Drusilla her desired
Access to the imperial presence late?"
Simon saw what she wanted, and was quick
To humor to the full her proud caprice.
He readily commanded to his face
A trouble of confusion and chagrin,
And stammered something inarticulate.
The merciless Poppæa pressed her point:
"Was it to me, or to somebody else,
I heard thee offer service of thine art?
Methinks thou spokest, or perhaps I dreamed,
Of certain potencies thou couldst exert
On my behalf — or some one's — if thou wouldst,
To make at need a mind amenable
To reason that might otherwise resist?"

Simon her humor flattered to its height,
And artfully grew more and more confused
Before her, till he judged her satisfied

That his humiliation was complete.
Then, with abject profession of remorse
And shame that he so far forgot her due
As to seek audience with the emperor
In any way other than through herself,
He humbly asked her what her wish might be;
In short, renewed the proffer of himself
To be her faithful servant all in all.

"But art thou not in prior duty bound
To that Drusilla fair of thine?" she asked.
"Yea, doubtless," the adroit dissembler said —
A protestation of deep loyalty
To his old mistress, not to be seduced,
Commingling strangely in his look and tone
With offer to be serviceable now.
"Supposing beautiful Drusilla's aims
And mine should clash?" Poppæa said. But he:
"That were calamity indeed — for her;
The far more beautiful must needs prevail.
She has perhaps her too aspiring hopes;
Her hopes, I own, I have no heart to dash.
Let her nurse them; but be it mine meanwhile
To watch and strive they do not pierce the breast

That suckles them in vain." "What meanest thou?"
Poppæa asked. "Why, this," the sorcerer said,
"Lady Drusilla's interests and her aims
May not agree. They do not, if her aims
And thine, O empress, clash. Her interests,
True interests, I mean, she best consults
In being to her sovereign loyal liege.
I serve the subject, when I serve the queen."

"'Empress,' thou namest me," Poppæa said.
"Thou knowest I am not empress." "Yea, I know,"
Said Simon, "empress not in name — as yet."
"Another," with deep implication said
Poppæa, "that imposing title bears."
"Were it not so," with apt intelligence,
Made instant answer Simon, "thou wouldst not
Need modestly disclaim the title — thou
Who worthily possessest now the power."
"Not all the power," Poppæa sagely said;
"Some real part of the power is in the name.
Help me to win the name, and fix thy price."
"My price would be the pleasure I should have

To see thee sitting, where thy right ere now
Had placed thee, on the half throne of the
world" —
So Simon with devout obeisance said.
Then added: "If the emperor should suspect —
But, pardon, thou hast asked me nothing yet."
"I ask thee now, speak freely out to me
All that is in thy mind," Poppæa said.
"If then, I say, the emperor should suspect —
Of course with ground for the suspicion (that
Well understood, no innocent to be wronged)" —
And Simon grinned intolerably a wry
Involuntary grin of import such,
So horribly conveyed, that almost she,
Poppæa, shuddered in recoil from him —
"Suspect, with reason shown, a full supply,
That the young partner of his bed and throne,
Octavia, is less worthy of his faith
Than were to —"

"Aye, I see, I see," broke in
Poppæa, her instinctive first recoil
Quite overmastered; it was of the flesh,
Mere backward creep of muscle and of nerve,

Repugnance of the inner spirit none.
"But to supply the reason — "

"Shall be mine,"
Said Simon, finishing her arrested speech.
He undertook at venture in the dark;
But to gain time, and to secure access,
His present errand, to the emperor,
He added, with demure and downcast look:
"The ground beneath us now is treacherous;
I could with greater freedom utter all
That might be needful in such case as this,
To other ear than thine, O empress fair,
Or any woman's. Let me, pray thee, see
The emperor. Thou shalt be well satisfied,
I pledge me, with the issue when it comes."

So Simon won him clear for then, and went —
His way made easy by Poppæa's part;
Yet not as with her privity, much less
As with her favor openly displayed —
To his wished waiting on the emperor.

"Thou art a go-between, I understand,"
Abruptly and ambiguously said

The emperor to Simon. Simon winced
A little, he so little wont to wince.
What did it mean? Had Nero overheard
Through some eavesdropper what had just now passed
Between him and Poppæa? Was he vexed?
Himself at least was inly vexed to hear
The opprobrious name of 'go-between' applied,
Where he had hoped for honor as a mage
And wielder of weird supernatural power.
He wavered, and found nothing to reply.

"Thou art modest," Nero said, with irony;
"But I have heard thy fame, thou needst not blush,
Pallas has told me how as go-between
Thou servedst his brother Felix in the East,
Finding for him a really royal spouse.
I hope thy go-between officiousness
Ended with bringing the devoted pair
Together? Nothing after had to do
With the late parting of the same by death?"

Simon was stumbled at such raillery,
Uneasily uncertain what it meant.
He writhed and wriggled on his feet; but deemed

The emperor best were pleased to have his will
Of banter, unreplied to — banter felt
As far too formidable for right zest,
Proceeding from a prince, and such a prince!

"Wilt ply again thy skill of go-between,
And faithfully, for me?" the emperor said.
A question fairly asked, which must be met:
Could it concern — Poppæa? In such case,
The office of the 'go-between' — as pleased
This jocular young ruler of mankind
To name him ignominiously — might take
A dignity almost imperial on;
Simon would frame reply comportably:
"If the august will of his majesty,
The emperor of the world, should condescend
To make one most unworthy of the grace
In any wise elect ambassador
To serve the imperial pleasure at what court
Soever of such beauty as were fit
To be assumed for partner of his throne —
Why, Simon could but pledge his loyalty,
And trust his wonted fortune might not fail."

"Thou takest thy pander's part full seriously,"

The emperor, bantering still, but curious, said :
" Perhaps our grave ambassador of love
Might, from his pregnant wit, even nominate
The court of beauty where befitting were
The majesty of empire should pay suit.
The Roman state impersonate in me
Gives ear."

Played with in such ambiguous wise
Simon was much perplexed to choose his way.
He flung himself on rumor, and replied :
" The Roman state, embodied in thyself
Most worthily, most worthily has made
Its choice already ; mine to serve that choice."
" Thou art an oracle ; who knows so much,
Should needs know more," the emperor teasing said.
" Advise me, thou who knowest so easily
What my choice is, how I may win my choice.
Consider that the emperor of the world
Is after all the veriest slave in Rome ;
The rascal people lord it over him.
I have no trouble with the senators,
They follow like whipped spaniels at my heels —
The reverend 'conscript fathers,' to be sure !

But the great Roman people is a spell
I am afraid of; I must please the mob,
Who will not let me marry as I would;
The many-headed monster mob of Rome."
The emperor gave his peevish humor vent,
Contemptuously regardless of who heard.

But Simon was alert and caught his cue.
"The tyrant mob may easily be fooled,"
He said with politic suggestion deep;
"Fooled rightly, they will clamor, not against,
But for, the emperor's wish." "Open thy thought,"
Said Nero; "be an oracle indeed —
For wisdom; for equivocation, not."
"What the imperial wish is," Simon said,
"It were impiety in me to guess.
But grant it were a prince's natural wish
To change a barren or a faithless spouse
For one more suited to his princely mind,
Ways might be found to make his realm agree."
"Suppose the case, then; how wouldst thou proceed?"
So, as if only idly, Nero asked.
"Let me suppose a case of faithlessness,"

Simon, with study of the emperor's face,
Adventured; "that is the more simple sort,
More likely, or at least of easier proof.
The offended prince reluctantly succumbs
To testimony — whereof the supply
Will manifestly equal the demand"—
This with both look and tone sententious said—
"He makes his loving people confidant
Of his misfortune — which is also theirs —
And with one voice they generously cry,
'Put her away, and wed a worthy mate.'"
The emperor listening sank into a muse,
Which Simon as of happy omen took.

Nero was deeper than the sorcerer guessed;
His muse had really, as that worthy framed
His speech to have it, of Octavia been
And of Poppæa in Octavia's room;
But for his present prurient whim the young
Imperial profligate was fain to make
Misdeem the Jewish pander otherwise.
As if Drusilla, not Poppæa, had,
Unnamed between them, been that worthier one
Of whom the sorcerer darkly all the time

Had hinted, and whom he himself the while
Had understood him tacitly to mean,
Nero now said, rousing from reverie—
Ejaculation like soliloquy:
"Worthy to be the consort of a king!
Perhaps well widowed—for some nobler fate
Hers by the right of beauty and of wit—
Drusilla, thy good mistress, that born queen!
Tell her this from the emperor, and ask
When she will let the emperor himself
Pay her his personal homage at her court;
Some night it needs must be, and in disguise—
To fool the prying people as thou saidst.
Prove thou thy prowess as ambassador,
And bring me speedy word of thy success.'
The emperor let the sorcerer retire.

A little pleased, but disappointed more,
Simon his message to his mistress brought.
He wreaked his disappointment upon her,
By rendering Nero's proffer of himself
In terms the most offensive to her pride:
"Know, O my lady—empress, by just right
Of high ambition and of mettle high—

Lucius Domitius Nero Cæsar, proud
Young wearer of the crown that Julius wore —
Or would not wear, but three times put it by —
Successor to the great Augustus, who
Earth's jarring fragments welded to a whole,
And settled order government and peace —
Conscious of his own merit, condescends
To ease his aching shoulders of the weight
Of empire by indulging now and then
In certain little pranks of pleasantry,
More lively, as might seem, than dignified.
He dons him his disguise and sallying forth
Goes roystering through the streets incognito,
Attended by a well-becoming rout
Of boon companions in hilarity —
Much to the scandal of good citizens,
Specially such as happen to be out;
These often get quite tumbled up and down
In the wild frolic of imperial sport.
They make the night — these rouses are by night —
Merry with jocund laughter, and with song
That would be ribald save that it is sung
By a divine Augustus in his cups.
I am permitted, as ambassador

From this imperial personage, to bear
Thee courteous salutations, and to say
The emperor deems thee worthy to be queen,
Thinks thou perhaps wast widowed in good time
To make thee to a nobler fortune free;
Begs thou wilt name the night when he may come
In person and pay imperial court to thee."

"This, Simon, is impudence insufferable,
Equal affront to Nero and to me,"
Drusilla in a flame of fury said.
"Thou hast overstepped thy limit jesting so.
Repair thy fault forthwith, or suffer for it!
Tell me in terms, and without flourishes,
What word, if any, the emperor charged thee with."
Maliciously unmoved, the sorcerer said:
"With some loss doubtless — most regrettable,
Granted; yet scarce avoidable, confess —
From the august imperial dignity
Of the first utterance, I have told thee true
The message Cæsar bade me bear to thee."
Drusilla, with rekindled anger, cried:
"Thou hast cruelly misrepresented me,
To bring upon me such indignity.

In what mistaken terms of complaisance,
Tell me — mistaken, or even treacherous —
Didst thou present me to his majesty?"
Simon, exasperating purposely
By his cool air of imperturbable,
Said: "Madam, it seemed wisest policy —
Best suited to avoid that compromise
I knew to be so justly hateful to thee
Of dignity and modesty and shame —
So I observed a careful reticence,
But drew the emperor on from point to point
To be first — as he was — in mentioning thee."

Drusilla's fury now redoubled rose;
With blazing eyes she rather hissed than said:
"He takes Drusilla to be such as that!
Will seek me under cover of the dark!
Hark thee! *I* to be visited by stealth,
The happy finish of a night's carouse!
Give him my compliments and tell him, Nay!
Bid him by daylight come, in proper state,
And bringing with him his empire cast it down
A proffered bauble at Drusilla's feet —
I will consider of the matter then.

Up, go, speed, tell him what I thus have said.
I am in haste to wash this stain away,
And fling his insult back into his face.
He is mighty, he — but I am haughty, I;
I am as haughty as he mighty is:
I burn in hell until he knows this from me.
Thou hangest — wilt not go? — art false to me?
Aye, thou art false, or thou hadst out of hand
Told him thou knewest Drusilla otherwise
Than to dare take her such a word as that!"

"The emperor should see my lady now,"
Said Simon with provoking flattery,
Provoking, yet it mollified her mind,
And shaped her to receive what he would say —
"Yea, but the emperor should behold thee thus –
If he would have his beauty spiced with spite,
And splendid with a little awfulness.
I have never seen thee so the queen before!
But, madam, in good sooth and soberness,
Behooves that we consider well our way.
The emperor is a dangerous man — or god,
Thou knowest they deify this personage;
It were not wise to tempt him overmuch.

Yet I agree thy woman instinct well
Advises thee to dictate terms to him.
Let these be high — agreed; but not too high:
Not quite impossible, observe; enough,
No more, to give thee value in his eyes.

"I think of one end that thou mightst subserve
By a condition prior to consent —
An end long meditated, and most dear,
Not to thee only, but no less to him,
Thy well-belovéd consort late. Why not
Say to the emperor: 'Give thou me a pledge
Beforehand of thy worthy sentiments
Toward thy poor vassal, in this little thing:
Put Paul to death and all the cursèd crew
That hold with him, exempting not a soul —
This do thou first, O emperor august,
A very little thing, and see if then
Thy will find let in my will; so be I
Am honored as befits my quality' —
A guardian clause elastic of import,
Which thou mayst after construe as thou wilt?
Such terms I might obey to bear to him,

And they could only heighten his regard
Of thee, and more thy hold on him assure."

"There was Poppæa sitting by his side
That day!" Drusilla bitterly exclaimed.
"And knowest thou by what arts her place she won?"
Pressed Simon; "she was not afraid to impose
Conditions on her lover; she told him,
'Thou must do thus, and thus,' and he admired
Her for her spirit, and succumbed; do thou
Likewise, and prove thy right to reign — by reigning.
It is not quite so proud to reign, I grant
Thee, as to spurn; but bend thy pride so much:
Spurning is fine, but reigning profits more."
"Thou hast well advised, my Simon," with strong qualms
Subdued of pride, and loathing sprung from pride,
Drusilla made reply; and Simon left
The humbled woman to her wretchedness.

For she no longer now deceived herself,
Or was by Simon deceived, to keep her hope
Of splendid triumph by the emperor's side.
Salt tears and bitter, after he had gone,
She stained the queenly beauty of her face

Withal and quenched the brilliance of her eyes.
Her chalice was of disappointment full;
She had sinned, and she was still to sin, in vain:
She knew it, but she did not change her choice.
Her only comfort in her hour of shame
Was that at least a drop of sweet revenge
And malice gratified might mingle yet—
A dash of soothing—in the draught she drank;
She yet might see her heart's desire on Paul.

What if thou dost, Drusilla! Thou wilt see
The hated dying, not as one who dies,
Rather as one who, borne aloft and crowned,
Rides celebrating triumph over death!
The while thou seest exalted to the place
Thou fain hadst purchased for thyself with crime
Poppæa, empress by the emperor throned,
Spouse in the room of young Octavia slain.
Go, wretched woman, with thy little son
Beside thee, down the valley of the years—
Years few and evil, full of many woes—
Until thou shalt with him be overwhelmed
In that volcano ruin, thy fit doom!

With first obeisance to Poppæa paid
(And blithe report to her of progress good
Toward what she wished — wanting, he cheerly thought,
But one more audience to attain the goal)
Simon betook him to the emperor,
Who greeted him with: "Well, what, pander? Speak!
No parley, no ambages; great affairs
Are now engaging me. Is all arranged?
What is the night appointed? O, I see
Broad written over all thy countenance,
Palter, pretext, delay, to tantalize
Forsooth and tease a lover's eagerness.
But I am in no mood to be played with;
Thou balkest me at thy peril; speak, man, speak!
What message does the fair Drusilla send?"

Simon came hating with a perilous hate,
Hate perilous to himself, the emperor
For all the scorning poured before on him;
Now, at such words of scorn more bitter yet,
His fierce resentment almost overbore
His fear; it threatened to burst out in flame.

But he was prudent and afraid enough
To smother it — as yet; the deeper burned
It in his bosom, forced to smoulder there.
His hatred and his fear together made
His wit clear, swift, and ready to command.
He dared not fence, and so he answered fair —
At some cost to his mistress, more than he
Foreshadowed in obtaining her consent:
"My lady agrees, but does not fix the time."
"Agrees, of course agrees," grossly replied
Nero; "but when, thou paltering rascal, when? —
That is the point thou knowest, and she knows."
"Lady Drusilla begs the emperor
Will," wily Simon said, "do her the grace
To choose his own time; his choice will be hers."
"Beyond just expectation complaisant!"
With a placated grin, the emperor said.
Simon made thrifty haste not to let slip
His favorable chance precarious;
He spoke: "Aye, when thy gracious majesty
Shalt have appointed death deserved for Paul
And for the pestilent crew his company,
And shalt have signified to her thy leave
To see the sentence visited on them —

The very night which follows that bright day
Of vengeance on the emperor's enemies
Shall brighter than that day to her be made
If she may welcome then as visitant
Him who shall so have pledged her his regard.'

"Ah, so she makes conditions after all,"
Clouding his brow, but lightly, Nero said.
"A woman is a woman," Simon replied,
"And queen Drusilla is high-spirited
Doubtless beyond the common; humor her,
I pray thee, in this trifle; thou wilt note
How that, in seeming so to save her pride
Somewhat, her dignity, her modesty,
She really seeks to serve a public end
Of justice and of good imperial fame."
"Thou makest her worthy of a throne indeed,"
The emperor with indulgent sarcasm said,
"With her wise forecast and expansive views."
"Faith toward the person of the emperor —
Faith, and perhaps some nearer sentiment —
Inspires her to be large in statesmanship,"
Said Simon — eased a moment in his mind
To be diplomatist in honeyed lies.

"Tell her I will consult my oracle,"
Nero maliciously replied; "and say
My oracle is a lady, hence will know
Better than I should dare pretend I can
What would be fit in such peculiar case.
As fountain prime of justice to my realm,
I own I have some scruples in this thing —
Whether it were ideal right and good
To barter sentences of life and death
Simply that I may please a lady fair,
And be a favored suitor at her court.

"But I perhaps will toss a die and see
What chance will say; chance is a prudent god,
And, in his seeming-random way, is right
As oft as wisdom with his reasons weighed:
Besides I can keep on throwing, till the turn
Pleases my fancy of the moment. Go,
Solemn ambassador from court to court,
Report what I have said, but give a wink
At end to mean thou guessest all is well."

Simon, retiring, soon Poppæa sought,
And, with dark hint and indirection, told
How he had dropped into the emperor's ear

A seed of such suggestion as, he thought,
Would quickly spring and blossom and bear fruit
To the advantage of her dearest wish:
It would but need attaint Octavia's faith
As consort of the emperor, and so,
By open operation of the law,
Set her aside and leave him lorn of wife.
The acclamation of the people then
Would join the emperor's own desire to fill
Octavia's vacant room with — whom but one?
But would Poppæa help him in one thing?
He greatly wished to give the emperor proof
Of what he could accomplish in his art
Of conjuring with weird supernatural powers;
He thought his weight as intermediary
In her behalf would be increased thereby.
Poppæa, promising to stir up the mind
Of Nero to a proper appetite
For Simon's thaumaturgy, let him go.

While such fruits in the dark were growing ripe,
Things in the open looked the self-same way.
Stephen, who daily scouted in the world
Without of Rome, its rumor, its event,

Brought thence one day to Paul ill-boding word:
"Burrus is dead, that just man; how he died,
Whether of sickness, poison, suicide,
No man can say — or rather all men say,
Some, one thing, some, another; doubtful all.
But two men take his place in prefecture,
One, Tigellinus — baser none than he:
I doubt thou wilt come to feel his heavy hand.
Then that vile woman Poppæa, so they say,
Has become Jewish proselyte, forsooth.
Wherefore? No doubt, colluding with Drusilla —
The wicked Simon with his sorcery,
And with his office low of go-between,
Egging them on — to be Jews good enough,
The three together, to act in Shimei's place
As thine accusers to the emperor.
O, my heart sinks in doubt and fear for thee!"
"It need not, Stephen; my heart is buoyant," Paul
Said to his nephew in calm and firm reply.
"Nothing can fall out from the order fair
Of God's will for His chosen and well-beloved;
All things together work for good to them."
"All things?" said Stephen; "Lord, increase my
faith!"

For he hung staggered at the paradox.
"O, yea, all things, exception none," said Paul.

But hardly had been uttered those strong words,
When, in the door, rudely burst open, stood
Two armed minions of the prefecture.
"Wanted, for torture on the witness-rack"—
One of these spoke in strident tones and hard—
"Onesimus, a Phrygian runaway,
Slave of the late lord Felix, harbored here.
Point out the rogue; we are under strait command,
And Tigellinus will brook no delay.
Ah, there he is — he has betrayed himself —
White as a corpse; were he as innocent!
Come, rascal, and cheer thee up, thou art to have
Thy Syrus for a fellow on the rack."
With rally such, in coarsest irony,
They hurried off Onesimus to doom —
Scarce time to Paul for breathing in his ear
To bid him in the strength of Christ be strong.

"O, uncle, 'all things' to Onesimus,
Him also, in a fearful stead like this?"
Said Stephen, in vicarious agony.
"Would I could take his stead for him!" said Paul.

"I cannot, but Christ can, and will — nay, did,
Then when He suffered all on Calvary.
Pray for Onesimus that he his trust
Withdraw not from the Lord who thus proves
him —
And pray for Syrus that his faith fail not.
Now, O Lord Jesus, in Gethsemane
And on the bitter cross of Calvary
Thyself so anguished once in that frail flesh
Thou worest for our sake — that Thou mightst
suffer! —
Help, help, thy servants in their sudden hour."

The soldier that was manacled to Paul
Wondered, but reverenced, when these things he
heard.

BOOK XXIV.

THE END.

The two slaves, Onesimus and Syrus, bear their torture with constancy, refusing to testify otherwise than in grateful praise of Paul. The emperor, at Seneca's prompting, has secretly overheard their testimony, and, obeying a caprice of justice and of pity, he follows a further hint from Seneca to let Paul go free under bond to appear again when formal accusation shall be laid against him from Jerusalem. Paul thus released sends home to Holy Land the friends that had thence accompanied him to Rome, and accomplishes his last missionary tours, with Luke only for companion.

Meantime Drusilla, in a desperate hope revived by the rumored fall from imperial favor of Poppæa, sends Simon once more to secure for his mistress the long-postponed meeting with Nero. Simon plays Drusilla false and pretends to the emperor that she had indulgently sent him, Simon, to sue on his own belalf for the privilege of practising his art in the palace. Nero agrees that he may do this on condition that he shall first have secured from his mistress fresh consent to receive an imperial visit in her house. Simon, stung by the emperor's scorn of him, had wrought himself up to the temerity of attempting to play on Nero's guilty conscience by an exhibition that should bring up before the tyrant a dreadful recollection of one of his own most heinous crimes. The result proves suddenly fatal to Simon.

Paul, brought back in due time for trial, becomes the victim not only of enmity openly working under legal forms against him, but of secret intrigue for unholy personal purposes on the emperor's part. Condemned to die, after having been permitted first to speak in his own defence, the apostle is led to a suburb of Rome, and there beheaded. Luke, enjoined thereto by Paul, gives to his kindred and friends in Palestine an account of the end, of which he was eye-witness.

THE END.

Onesimus and Syrus had been seized
To make them swear a dreadful perjury;
It was persuasion from Drusilla wrought
With Tigellinus to commit this deed
Of outrage against ruth and righteousness:
Those bondmen should be brought, by utmost pangs
Wreaked on them in the anguish of the rack,
To charge Paul with the poisoning of her spouse.

Drusilla first had vainly sought to bribe
Poor Syrus to that lie and perfidy.
Smiles, blandishments, entreaties, promises,
Failing — she next, with scourgings from her tongue,
Threats, thrusts from female weapons in her hands,
Had striven to warp him to her wish — in vain.
At last she, giving him up for torture, yet
Bade him remember he need only swear,
Therein supported by Onesimus,
That from Paul's hand he had a dust received —
Impalpable, so fine — of unknown power
To work unknown effect upon a man,

And had by Paul instructed been to sift
This secretly into some draught his lord
Would drink, and watch how it would gladden him —
That he had only to protest that lie,
Confessing then that, in all innocence
Of childish curiosity to see,
He did it when his mistress sent by him
A sleeping-draught to Felix in his bath —
Only just this, and straight for both of them,
Onesimus with Syrus, the sharp pains
And rending of the question should be stayed.

Syrus said sadly to Onesimus:
"O, would that Paul were here to give us heart!"
"Jesus is here, and He will give us heart,"
Onesimus replied; "let us trust Him."
"I fear I shall be broken to their will,"
Said Syrus, "and swear whatever they desire;
I am so in terror of the frightful pain!"
This was while they were binding the poor slaves
Upon the rack. His comrade spoke in cheer:
"'Lo, I am with you alway,' Jesus said;
He will not let us suffer overmuch.
I shall not wonder if He take away

The pain, almost — or altogether even.
For He abideth faithful — so Paul says,
And Paul has proved it over and over again.
At any rate, the promise Jesus made
To Paul once, when his need was very sore,
Will be as good to us in this our stead;
His grace will be sufficient for us still.
The dread is heavier than the pain will be."

And it was so; for after the first wrench,
Which well-nigh solved the jointings of their limbs,
The spirit rose the sovereign of the flesh
And bore those helpless victims of the rack
Triumphant as in painless ecstasy.
Their mortal frames became as instruments
Of music underneath the player's hand;
For every quivering nerve within them strung
Responded to the running torture's touch
In bursts of exclamation like the notes
Of a song sung to some pathetic tune
Wherein the pathos still keeps triumphing:
"Lord Jesus, this for Thee!" "And this!" "O, joy
That we are counted worthy thus to suffer!"

"It is not suffering, since for Thee we suffer!"
Meanwhile to every challenge touching Paul,
Though thrills of anguish broke their speech to cries,
They said, and would forever only say:
"He taught us nothing but to reverence
Our masters with all good fidelity
Of service rendered them out of true hearts
As to the Lord in heaven and not to men."

By secret orders from the emperor
The torture-room was cunningly contrived
To be a sort of whispering gallery,
An ear of Dionysius, to resound
Whatever might be uttered from the rack
Wrung out of victims put to question there —
Words, cries, sighs, groans, or moans of agony —
And carry them to distance where above,
If one should listen, they might all be heard.
Here Nero laid a listening ear that day —
Seneca's prompting, who was present too —
And heard Onesimus and Syrus bear
Their steadfast witness on behalf of Paul,
With adjuration mingled of a Name.

The not yet utterly extinguished spark
Of human in that indurated breast
(Perhaps therewith effect of fear infused—
Divinely—at such adjuration heard)
Responded in a transitory glow
Of something gentle that resembled ruth
Toward those poor sufferers faithful against pain;
Of something that resembled justice too
Toward Paul so stoutly witnessed for by them.
He forthwith bade release the witnesses;
And hearkened to a counsel touching Paul.
For Seneca adventured this to him—
A farewell flicker of his influence,
Ere Tigellinus overbore him quite—:
"Shouldst thou think well it might indeed be well,
To loose this Jewish prisoner from his thrall—
He giving surety under ample bond
To answer with his person at the bar
Of Cæsar upon summons, to be tried
Whenever shall appear accusers sent
Accredited from Jerusalem to Rome."

So out of darkness there sprang up a light
To Paul, and for that present he went free.

Soon at a meeting of thanksgiving held
To celebrate with praises to the Lord
His unexpected riddance out of thrall
Paul to his brethren and his kindred said:
"My life reprieved from threatened death in shame,
I dedicate anew to Christ the Lord.
I go hence, parting from you all with tears
Of joyful love, and thanks for love again
Mine in full measure from so many hearts
That have not here my bonds in Christ despised —
I go hence, in the Spirit bound, to bear
Far as I may abroad in all the world
The glorious gospel of the blesséd God.
Pray for me that I may be sped in peace,
And that before me doors of utterance may
Swing open wide wherever I am led.
The time is short for all of us; for me
Shorter, it may be, than our present joy
Buoys us to hope. Perhaps the Lord will come
And find me waking still — and not asleep —
To welcome Him descending in the air.
Amen! So may it be! Lord Jesus, come!

"And yet, belovéd, though these words I speak,

A more prevailing prescience in my heart
Forewarns me I shall witness with my blood
For Him who suffered unto blood for me.
If so it be, amen! Lord Jesus, yea,
Thy will for me is my will for myself;
I spring to it with joy, or far or near—
Unknown to me—enough that it is Thine!

"So, farewell, ye. Watch and remember, all,
That by the space of two full years in chains
I have not ceased to warn you night and day,
Each one, with tears. And now, behold, I know
That some of you to whom I have fulfilled
This ministry shall see my face no more.
O, brethren, I commend you unto God!
Be perfect, be of brave and hopeful cheer,
Be of one mind, abide in peace, and He,
The God of love and peace, shall with you be.
O, how my heart is large toward you! The love
Of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And the communion of the Holy Ghost
Be with you and abound—ever! Amen!"
Therewith Paul kneeled and prayed a breaking prayer;

And they all wept, and he wept with them all,
They falling on his neck and kissing him
In love and sorrow. Each one with himself
'Among them, I?' asked, and so sorrowed most
Of all for that word which he spoke, "I know
That some of you shall see my face no more."

Paul sent his kindred and his lovers — those
Who for his sake had sailed with him to Rome —
Back to find home again in Holy Land,
While he, with Luke for his companion sole,
Should run his rounds of mission through the world.
"But what ye can," he said, "before ye go,
Comfort Onesimus and Syrus, sick
With wounding for Christ's sake and mine; I have
Already bathed Onesimus with tears
Of love, and bidden him in Christ be strong:
Ye will not leave him till his health be whole
At least enough to take the journey back
To our Philemon, bearing thanks from me.

"Those here in Rome that love me I shall trust
To speed both you and him with needful aid —
Even as I trust them not to let me lack.

Onesimus no doubt will find a way
That ye could not, nor I, to carry help
To Syrus in his far more wretched case —
Beset with household craft and cruelty.
Pray ye for him; and lade Onesimus
In seeking Syrus deep with love from me.
Christ will not fail him, if he fail not Christ;
'It is but for a moment, all the pain,'
Charge it upon Onesimus to say,
'But for eternal ages is the joy!'

"Now unto such as can receive it I,
Under this present imminence of woe
Forerunning the return of Christ the Lord,
Give counsel not to marry but abide
In undistracted waiting for the Day.
Yet for our Stephen and Eunicé here,
Already long betrothed and lovers true,
My will is as their will is; let them wed.
Stephen as husband to Eunicé can
In journeying better fend both her and Ruth
Her mother; he as well can fend his own,
Rachel, the only — sister of my heart!"
Paul's voice a little failed him, ending thus;

And all took knowledge how his kindred love
Broke over him, a wave of tenderness!

So Stephen and Eunicé wedded were,
Paul each in turn adjuring solemnly:
"Thou, O Eunicé, wilt as wife be true,
That know I well, to whom thou thus hast wed.
Submit thyself to him in loyal love,
And as in pledged obedience to the Lord—
Less to his will so yielding than to Christ's.
For God ordains it that the husband be
Head to the wife, as to the church is Christ.
But thou, O Stephen, judge what sanction so
Is on the husband laid, to be how pure,
Above self-will and selfishness how high,
How full of ministration and of help,
How ready ever to self-sacrifice
For the wife's sake, how gentle and how kind!
Thou, therefore, Stephen, love thy wife, even so
As the Lord Jesus loved the church, His bride,
And for her gave Himself. Be happy, ye,
Belovéd, in a love so sanctified."
Paul blessed them, and they felt that they were
blessed.

When soon from Rome they took their homeward
way —
Ruth, Rachel, and the newly-wedded pair —
They wept that they had looked their last on Paul;
Wept with rejoicing that, a little while,
And the Lord coming would make all things glad.

Now Sergius Paulus chose it for his part
To fill Paul's purse, speeding him on his way;
But Krishna was of mind himself to go
With those who would return to Holy Land.
He longed with his own eyes to see the scenes
Amid which Jesus lived His life on earth
And to glean up from the tradition found
Haply there current in the mouths of men
Concerning Him, both what He taught and what
He was: the Indian's thought was he would then,
Full-laden with such treasures of the West,
To his own native East return and there
Dispense them to enrich his countrymen.
Paul bade him prosper in his wish, and go.

Acquitted thus of all his natural cares,
And joyful in the sense of his reprieve,
And springing toward the work that he would do,

And for that work renewed in strength by hope
And faith and love and zeal unquenchable
And passion for the saving of the souls
Of men, his fellows, perishing in sin —
Much more, by the almighty hand of God
Upon him stayed in an immortal youth —
That spent old man, refusing to be spent
Though spending daily like the river of God,
Set forward, Luke alone companion now,
To send with torch in hand a running fire
Of gospel conflagration round the world.

Go, Paul, forgetful of thyself, make speed!
Thou shalt not be forgotten of thy God!
Go, with that treasure for thy fellows fraught!
Go, with the future of the world in trust!
Nowhere in utmost islands of the sea,
Never till time shall be no more, shall men
Not owe thee debt for blessings manifold —
Crowning the life that now is, frail and fleet,
Crowning the nobler life that is to be —
Blessings theirs but because thou wouldst not shrink
From whatsoever hardship, peril, harm,
Loss, toil, self-sacrifice to martyrdom.

So thou mightst scatter far and wide for us
The deathless seeds of that which we enjoy
In harvest of all good, civility
Of morals and of manners, science, art,
Fair order, freedom, progress, light and life,
And, overvaulting all, the hope of heaven!

While Paul his circuits was accomplishing,
Paul's enemies (and ours) were not remiss,
Whether in Rome or in Jerusalem.
Drusilla, disappointed of her hopes
With Nero to ensnare his heart and be
Assumed to sit beside him on his throne,
Even cheated for the moment of the glut
She thought she had purchased at such cost to pride
Of extreme vengeance visited on Paul,
Was sullenly but more than ever bent
Not to fail yet of at least that desire.
She saw Octavia, sent to exile, way
Make for Poppæa's spousals; heard the shout
Of shallow hollow popular acclaim
That hailed her hated rival conqueror,
Bearing her as on billows of applause
To the high seat herself had hoped for once!

Envy and hatred ulcerous ate her heart—
But not despair; despair was not for her:
Malignity was fuel still to hope.
She despatched Simon to Jerusalem
To blow the embers smouldering there to flame
Of deadly accusation against Paul:
Simon was Shimei risen from the dead,
Shimei in all his pristine force unspent.
The elders of the Jews commissioned him,
With others to whom he was heart and head,
To press at Rome for Paul the doom of death.

Meantime the mouth of common fame began
To whisper that Poppæa, though a wife
To Nero now—perhaps because a wife
And mother of a daughter, Claudia, born
To him—no longer charmed him as of old.
Unholy hope flared up a flicker of flame
Delusive in Drusilla's breast once more.
Octavia, when her husband tired of her,
Went into exile and then went to death
To give Poppæa room; Poppæa's turn
Perhaps was nearing to make room for her,
Drusilla!

'Up, O heart!' she inly cried.
The emperor had indeed with fickle whim,
Dazed by some intercepting lure more nigh,
Forgotten quite his thought of tryst with her—
As her conditions too he had not met.
But her conditions now were well in train,
She trusted, to fulfill themselves on Paul;
And if before, some trace of conscience left
In Nero interfered to make him pause,
Such scruple would no longer be a let
To his desire, should his desire revive,
Of meeting her upon the terms she fixed
To satisfy at once her hate, her pride.
Simon then, from Jerusalem returned
Blithe with his prosperous mission and with hope,
Should go once more to Nero for her cause.

And Simon went, but went not for her cause.
He had a purpose of his own to serve—
Purpose malignant, fatuous—which, fulfilled,
Would swift recoil in ruin on himself.

No worship to Poppæa's setting sun
Paid by him now to win his way at court,
He boldly in Drusilla's name besought

Access to the imperial ear: that name
Procured him instant audience. Discomposed
A little by the sudden way he made
Simon stood faltering, and before his wit
Was ready with apt words the emperor spoke:
"What will thy mistress? She perhaps has thought
The emperor was a trifle slow to claim
His privilege at her court? Bid her take heart;
Things now begin to shape themselves aright."
By this time Simon had recovered himself;
He said: "My mistress is indulgent, Sire.
Knowing my fondness for my art, and wish
That I might entertain the emperor,
She begs thou wilt appoint a time for me—"
"O, aye," the emperor said; "return to her,
And if thou canst bring promptly back to me
Assurance of her grace that she forgives
My tardiness in the past, and will receive
Me yet upon the terms she fixed before—
Somewhat abated, aye, but in the main
Whole; for although the rabble rest she named
Are scattered and not worth regathering, Paul
Is under hand again, duly accused,
And freely may be dealt with to our wish—

Bring, I say, word to me that she consents,
And thou shalt exercise for me thine art
At pleasure here within my palace halls.
Go, and good speed, ambassador of love!'

The sarcasm and the irony took effect
To quicken in the sorcerer his resolve:
For Simon his own doom was teeming now.
He was infatuate with the vain conceit
That he the secret in his art possessed
Of a mock-supernatural power to play
Upon the conscience of the emperor
And fill his conscious breast with guilty fears:
So once he saw Paul play on Felix's,
Making him shudder on his judgment-throne;
Aye, and so he himself in sequel played
On the same kingly culprit with his spells.
Beyond all, Simon was beside himself
With suffocated hatred seeking breath
In freak of demonstration on the man
Who in the wantonness of despotic pride
Had so despised and mocked and flouted him.
Mad thus — judicially, and doubly — he,
Having brought back the word the emperor wished,

And had the promised day appointed him,
Dared an audacious and a fatal thing.

A series of phantasmagories shown
By him, he closed with a presentment, clear
In outline cast upon the palace wall
In shapes of shadow moving like grim life,
Of the dread scene of Agrippina's death:
There hung the vessel on a glassy sea;
The coping timbers causelessly fell down,
But missed the empress-mother figured there;
There followed then the ghastly after-act
Of mother-murder done in pantomime —
More ghastly, that it passed in silence all.

Simon mistook — it was his last mistake!
He had overweened both of the power his own,
And of the emperor's openness to fear.
Nero sat gazing on the spectacle
With heed moveless, and mute, and ominous,
Till the device was acted to the end.
Then still no sign he gave — save summons sent
Bidding two household soldiers straight come in.
To these he coldly, curtly, only said:
"Crucify me this Jew; do it at once!

Be gentle with him; make him last for days,
And every day bring me report of him."

Simon bethought him as he shuddering went
Hustled and hurried to that sudden doom,
Of his gold hoarded long for utmost need:
He offered it in ransom for his life.
The soldiers took it, share and share alike
Between them, but it did not buy his life!
Simon died miserably upon the cross.

'I have abolished *him!*' the emperor thought —
'The adamantine front of impudence!
Whimsical way of paying a lady court,
To crucify her conjurer out of hand!
I hope she did not greatly care for him!
Happily if she did I can repair
The loss to her by putting Paul to death.
Strange, they should hate that blameless man so much!
But reasons of state are strong — and reasons of love;
I must propitiate with a sacrifice.
Jove is compelled by fate mightier than he!'

The tetrarch Herod, to content the whim
And hatred of his wife Herodias,
Once at petition of her daughter fair —
Whose dancing measures beat at festival
Before him had, forsooth, the monarch pleased! —
Sent to behead John Baptist in his prison:
So Nero now in mind delivered Paul
To death — an unconsidered pledge and pawn
Of complaisance to a base woman paid.

As were a star by some avulsive force
Malignant sheer from out her pathway torn
Where she went singing her celestial way
Happy but to fulfill His high decree
Who orbed her and who sped her on her course
(Thenceforth to be abolished from a heaven
Lighted no longer with her lucent beams!);
So Paul was in his heavenly circuits stayed
And wrenched thence by the hand of violent power.
Rome had already round him flung the loop
Of her long lasso irresistible,
And drawn him home to Cæsar to be judged.

No little damped because their head was gone,
But more because he so had disappeared,

The Jews commissioned from Jerusalem
Pressed fierce their suit against their fellow-Jew.
Nero's assessors sat without their chief;
For Nero was grown indolent and lax,
And he deputed his judicial powers.
Yet oft deigned he to give his deputies
Hint of what judgment he desired from them;
And they now knew the doom required for Paul.

Paul was left lonely of all men save Luke;
But Luke the faithful chose with him his part.
Paul longed for Timothy, and wrote to him
Bidding him haste and bring John Mark to Rome.
But the end hasted more than these could haste,
And Timothy was never in the flesh
To greet again that father of his soul
Who, for the son's sake more than for his own,
Yearned toward the son to fix in him his faith
Seen nigh to falter in the face of things
Such as now fronted Paul. John Mark though once
In haste of spirit sundered from Paul's part,
Had long before been won again — to bide
Thenceforward ever fast in loyalty;

But as not Timothy, so neither he
Would comfort Paul in this his last assay.
So much the more Paul's lonely fortitude
In witness amid storms of obloquy
And under the impending threat of doom,
Then against doom itself upon him fallen,
Should at need brace them both to martyrdom.

Most exquisitely human-hearted, Paul
Could not but feel full sore his loneliness —
Loneliness more for sense of being forsaken.
"Demas," to Timothy he sighed, "has loved
This present world, and has forsaken me.
All men forsook me the first time I stood
To make my answer at the judgment-bar;
I pray it be not laid to their account!"
Nobly repined! — yet for a moment only;
Then cheerly added, this, and thankfully:
"Of men not one stood with me; but the Lord,
He with me stood, and cheered and strengthened me,
That all the gentiles might the gospel hear;
And for that time from out the lion's mouth
I was delivered. Yea, and betide what may,

Still the Lord Jesus will deliver me
From every machination of ill men,
And to His heavenly kingdom bring me safe.
To whom be glory evermore! Amen!"

Enjoined thereto by Paul, Luke bore from Rome
To Rachel and the rest in Holy Land—
That dear companionship of kindred hearts—
The tidings how all ended with his death;
Yet how, before he died, and when he died,
He conquered gloriously. Luke said to them:
"He was not taken at all at unawares;
Nothing surprised and nothing daunted him.
Nay, he rejoiced in spirit that all was now
Finished for him on earth; that he might lay
His warrior's harness off and take his crown.
He said this to his judges with such calm
Clear consciousness of speaking simple truth,
Such sober confidence devoid of vaunt,
That something like conviction seized on them
Listening; while on the listening multitude—
For the basilica was thronged—I felt
Fall a great hush and a pathetic awe.

'I know well whom I have believed,' he said,

'And my persuasion is complete that He
Is able to keep that which I have given
In trust to Him against the coming day.
Yea, ye will surely send me hence to die;
The time of my departure ye have set;
So much is in your power to do to me;
But there is more, far more, beyond your power.
Life ye can take, but not the good of life.
The good of life is lodged where it is safe,
And life indeed no power can take from me;
That is committed to almighty hands,
Almighty, and all-faithful, and all-wise:
There it is mine, inalienably mine.
So there is that in me which bides secure
From any terror men can threat me with.
A witness in my heart attests that I
Have fought the good fight, fought it to the end;
That I have run my race and touched the goal;
Through all temptation, I have kept the faith.
I strain my eyes before me and I see,
Shining, a crown, the crown of righteousness,
Held in the hand once pierced and pierced for me
Of the arisen Lord and glorified,
The righteous Judge who will award the prize.

That prize he holds for me' — "Hereon," Luke said,
"Paul turned toward where I stood — O, how I
wished
There had been many others with me then
To hear what I heard, and to take his look,
That kindling look of large vicarious hope! —
Paul turned toward me his heaven-illumined face,
And added: 'Yea, for me holds — nor for me
Alone, but with me all men also who
Have loved the bright appearing of the Lord.

'I have been bound, but not the word of God;
That has run freely, sped around the world.
I am to die, but the quick word of God,
So much incapable of dying, lives
Forever an invulnerable life.
This Roman empire, like those empires old,
Will crumble into dust and pass away;
The temples and the palaces of Rome
Will vanish like a vision from men's eyes;
But the majestic kingdom of my God
Will stand forever and forever grow.
Within its walls, I have not built in vain;
For I have founded on a corner-stone

That never will be moved. The earth we tread
Will tremble and be moved out of its place;
The heavens above us, sun and moon and star,
Will yet be rolled together like a scroll,
Or folded like a vestment laid aside;
But what on Jesus Christ for corner-stone
I, with much prayer and many tears, in faith
Have builded to the glory of His grace,
Will still in ever-during beauty shine.

'But though I speak thus of the vanishing
Of all this fabric of a mighty state,
All this imperial pomp and power of Rome,
And the succeeding of an order new,
A heavenly kingdom with a heavenly King,
Yet know, O judges, that in all good faith,
I ever everywhere have taught and shown
Loyal submission to the powers that be.
By letter, ere I came myself to Rome,
I charged this duty on my brethren here;
I told them they could not in any wise
Obedient be to God, and not obey
The powers by Him set over them to rule:
Ask my disciples, make them witnesses,

They all will testify I taught them thus.
Not that my life is such a prize to me;
But I would have the holy name of Him
Who bought me with His blood, and made of me
A herald of His glorious grace to men —
Yea, I would have that ever-blessèd Name
Pure of reproach through me before you all.

'I thank my judges that at least I may
Thus freely speak once more before I die.
A cloud of witnesses around me here
Hangs in my eye; I might behold, beyond
These and above, innumerably bright,
Thick ranks of hovering angels beckoning me;
But I stretch out my hands in suit to these,
My fellows, and beseech them one and all,
And you, my judges, I beseech — and would
I might beseech the whole world with my voice
Now speaking for its last time in men's ears! —
Be reconciled through Jesus Christ to God.
With me it is a light thing to be judged
Of men; albeit obeisance due I pay
To this tribunal as ordained of God.
But I look forward to be judged of One

Before whose eyes the secrets of men's hearts
Lie open like the pages of a book.
And ye too all who judge me, and all these
Who see me judged — yea, and himself, your head,
The emperor, with his counsellors, and all
That under earth slumber or in the sea,
The living generations and the dead,
One congregation and assembly called
At last together whencesoever found,
Shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.
O, I adjure you and entreat you, hear
Betimes my message sent from God to you.
One advocate alone, none other, can
Plead to the Father with effect for you.
But He can, for it is the Judge Himself
Will be your advocate, if but you will
Now choose Him to be such, and He will speak
For you with a resistless eloquence
Of wounds shown in His hands and feet and side,
Signs of His suffering borne in the behalf
Of all those who will come to God by Him.

'I have a vision of that judgment-scene:
These wide-embracing walls I see expand

To the horizon's utmost rim around;
This roof is lifted to the top of heaven;
This multitude is multiplied to count
Beyond all count; yon judgment-throne becomes
Dazzling beyond the splendors of the sun
With an exceeding whiteness, such as eye
Of man nor angel can abide to see;
And He that sits thereon, and makes it dark
By the excess of brightness in His face,
Speaks, and His voice to hear is as the sound
Of many waters rolling down in flood.
I heard that voice once speaking from the sky
Amid a blaze of light falling around
Me at midnoon that blanched the Syrian sun
Burning from his meridian height on me.
O men, my brethren, it was a dread voice;
But I obeyed it, and I therefore lived.
Obey it ye, heard speaking through my lips
And bidding, Come! O, sweet and dreadful voice,
Both sweet and dreadful, uttering now that word!
Dreadful, not sweet, it then will sound to those
Who hearing thus the invitation, Come,
Harden their hearts to disobey. For then
In changed tones it will speak a different word.

'Hence, curséd of my Father!' it will say,
And drive the disobedient as with sword
Of flame forth issuing and pursuing them,
Pursuing and devouring, while they fly
In vain forever and forever far
Before it, and no refuge anywhere
In all the boundless universe of God
Find from the fiery fangs of that fierce sword!'

"I never saw," said Luke, "such pity cast
Such pathos over such solemnity,
Such faithfulness to God, to man, as then,
While he in that hushed audience spoke these things,
Lived in Paul's looks and tuned his prophet tones.
No one that listened and beheld escaped
The power of God; and some perhaps believed.

"But they condemned the guiltless man to die;
And, like his Lord, he died without the gates.
They led him to a chosen spot not far
Beyond the city walls — he all the way
Seen walking like one meekly triumphing;
For a train followed and attended him,
Before whom he was as a conqueror.

Where gushed a fountain in a pine-tree shade
Suburban, there they made their prisoner stay.
Here they beheaded him; Christ suffered it—
What matter to His servant how he died?
The pain was short, if sharp; perhaps indeed
There was no pain at all, but only swift
Transition to a state of perfect rest
From pain, from weariness, from every ill,
Forever in the presence of the Lord.
The dear dissevered head we joined again
To the worn-weary body as we could:
We comforted ourselves to see the peace
That the white-shining countenance expressed,
And stanched our tears and eased our aching hearts
To think that all his toil was over now,
And all the contradiction he so long
Had suffered from his thankless fellow-men;
And that he had aspired triumphantly
At last to be at home with Christ in heaven,
There to behold the glory that He had,
Ere the beginning of the world, with God
His Father.

"So we buried him in hope

There on the selfsame spot where he had fallen;
And said to one another the great words,
Heroic, heartening, full of heavenly truth,
Himself with streaming tears once spoke to us—
You will remember — then when Mary died,
And when we buried her that sunset hour
There on that holy hill in Melita."

With such a gentle cadence to his tale,
Luke ended; and those sat in silence long,
Remembering with sweet heart-ache what had been.
Then, having knelt together first in prayer,
And having lifted a pathetical
High hymn of triumph over death, they rose
Calm and addressed themselves anew to life:
A little patience and the Lord would come.

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